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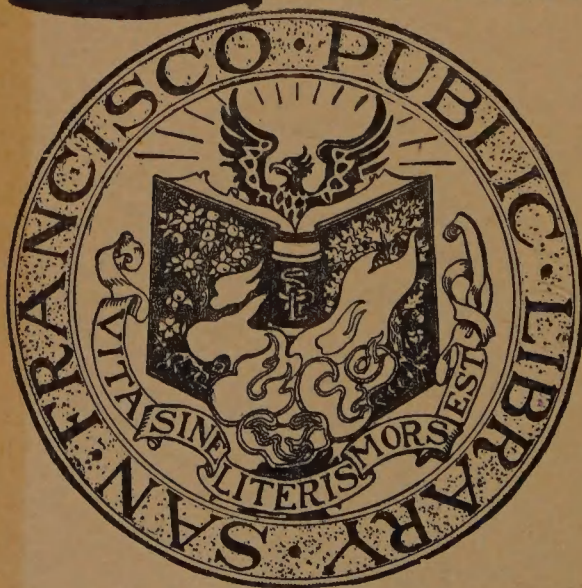


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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF  
LEIGH HUNT







THE END OF THE WORLD



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Hunt, Leigh, 1784-1859.

The autobiography of  
Leigh Hunt, with  
[1903]

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## CHAPTER XIV

### IMPRISONMENT

[FEB. 3, 1813—FEB. 3, 1815.]

WE parted in hackney-coaches to our respective abodes, accompanied by two tipstaves apiece, and myself by my friend Barron Field.

The tipstaves prepared me for a singular character in my gaoler. His name was Ives. I was told he was a very self-willed personage, not the more accommodating for being in a bad state of health; and that he called everybody *Mister*. "In short," said one of the tipstaves, "he is one as may be led, but he'll never be *druv*."

The sight of the prison-gate<sup>1</sup> and the high wall was a dreary business. I thought of my horseback and the downs of Brighton; but congratulated myself, at all events, that I had come thither with a good conscience. After waiting in the prison-yard as long as if it had been the anteroom of a minister, I was ushered into the presence of the great man. He was in his parlour, which was decently furnished, and he had a basin of broth before him, which he quitted on my appearance, and rose with much solemnity to meet me. He seemed about fifty years of age. He had a white night-cap on, as if he was going to be hanged, and a great red face, which looked as if he had been hanged already, or were ready to burst with blood. Indeed, he was not allowed by his physician to speak in a tone above a whisper.

The first thing which this dignified person said was, "Mister, I'd ha' given a matter of a hundred pounds,

[<sup>1</sup> Horsemonger Lane Gaol, which was situated on the south side of Trinity Square, Newington Causeway.]

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that you had not come to this place—a hundred pounds!” The emphasis which he had laid on the word “hundred” was ominous.

I forget what I answered. I endeavoured to make the best of the matter; but he recurred over and over again to the hundred pounds; and said he wondered, for his part, what the Government meant by sending me there, for the prison was not a prison fit for a gentleman. He often repeated this opinion afterwards, adding, with a peculiar nod of his head, “And, Mister, they knows it.”

I said, that if a gentleman deserved to be sent to prison, he ought not to be treated with a greater nicety than any one else: upon which he corrected me, observing very properly (though, as the phrase is, it was one word for the gentleman and two for the letter of prison-lodgings), that a person who had been used to a better mode of living than “low people,” was not treated with the same justice, if forced to lodge exactly as they did.

I told him his observation was very true; which gave him a favourable opinion of my understanding; for I had many occasions of remarking, that he looked upon nobody as his superior, speaking even of members of the royal family as persons whom he knew very well, and whom he estimated at no higher rate than became him. One royal duke had lunched in his parlour, and another he had laid under some polite obligation. “They knows me,” said he, “very well, Mister; and, Mister, I knows them.” This concluding sentence he uttered with great particularity and precision.

He was not proof, however, against a Greek Pindar, which he happened to light upon one day among my books. Its unintelligible character gave him a notion that he had got somebody to deal with, who might really know something which he did not. Perhaps the gilt leaves and red morocco binding had their share in the magic. The upshot was, that he always showed himself anxious to appear well with me, as a clever fellow, treating me with great civility on all occasions but one, when I made him very angry by disappointing

## IMPRISONMENT

him in a money amount. The Pindar was a mystery that staggered him. I remember very well, that giving me a long account one day of something connected with his business, he happened to catch with his eye the shelf that contained it, and, whether he saw it or not, abruptly finished by observing, "But, Mister, you knows all these things as well as I do."

Upon the whole, my new acquaintance was as strange a person as I ever met with. A total want of education, together with a certain vulgar acuteness, conspired to render him insolent and pedantic. Disease sharpened his tendency to fits of passion, which threatened to suffocate him; and then in his intervals of better health he would issue forth, with his cock-up-nose and his hat on one side, as great a fop as a jockey. I remember his coming to my rooms, about the middle of my imprisonment, as if on purpose to insult over my ill health with the contrast of his convalescence, putting his arms in a gay manner a-kimbo, and telling me I should never live to go out, whereas he was riding about as stout as ever, and had just been in the country. He died before I left prison.

The word *jail*, in deference to the way in which it is sometimes spelt, this accomplished individual pronounced *gole*; and Mr. Brougham he always spoke of as Mr. *Bruffam*. He one day apologized for this mode of pronunciation, or rather gave a specimen of vanity and self-will, which will show the reader the high notions a jailer may entertain of himself. "I find," said he, "that they calls him *Broom*; but, Mister" (assuming a look from which there was to be no appeal), "*I calls him Bruffam!*"

Finding that my host did not think the prison fit for me, I asked if he could let me have an apartment in his house. He pronounced it impossible; which was a trick to enhance the price. I could not make an offer to please him; and he stood out so long, and, as he thought, so cunningly, that he subsequently overreached himself by his trickery, as the reader will see. His object was to keep me among the prisoners, till he could at once sicken me of the place, and get the permission of

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the magistrates to receive me into his house; which was a thing he reckoned upon as a certainty. He thus hoped to secure himself in all quarters; for his vanity was almost as strong as his avarice. He was equally fond of getting money in private, and of the approbation of the great men whom he had to deal with in public; and it so happened, that there had been no prisoner, above the poorest condition, before my arrival, with the exception of Colonel Despard.<sup>1</sup> From abusing the prison, he then suddenly fell to speaking well of it, or rather of the room occupied by the colonel; and said, that another corresponding with it would make me a capital apartment. "To be sure," said he, "there is nothing but bare walls, and I have no bed to put in it." I replied, that of course I should not be hindered from having my own bed from home. He said, "No; and if it rains," observed he, "you have only to put up with want of light for a time." "What!" exclaimed I, "are there no windows?" "Windows, Mister!" cried he; "no windows in a prison of this sort; no glass, Mister: but excellent shutters."

It was finally agreed, that I should sleep for a night or two in a garret of the gaoler's house, till my bed could be got ready in the prison and the windows glazed. A dreary evening followed, which, however, let me completely into the man's character, and showed him in a variety of lights, some ludicrous, and others as melancholy. There was a full-length portrait in the room, of a little girl, dizenod out in her best. This, he told me, was his daughter, whom he had disinherited for her disobedience. I tried to suggest a few reflections, capable of doing her service; but disobedience, I found, was an offence doubly irritating to his nature, on account of his sovereign habits as a gaoler; and seeing his irritability likely to inflame the plethora of his countenance, I desisted. Though not allowed to speak above a whisper, he was extremely willing to

[<sup>1</sup> Edward Marcus Despard (1751-1803), one of a band of persons who conspired to assassinate George III. He was beheaded on Feb. 5, 1803.]



## IMPRISONMENT

talk ; but at an early hour I pleaded my own state of health, and retired to bed.

On taking possession of my garret, I was treated with a piece of delicacy, which I never should have thought of finding in a prison. When I first entered its walls, I had been received by the under-gaoler, a man who seemed an epitome of all that was forbidding in his office. He was short and very thick, had a hook-nose, a great severe countenance, and a bunch of keys hanging on his arm. A friend stopped short at sight of him, and said, in a melancholy tone, "And this is the gaoler !"

Honest old *Cave* ! thine outside would have been unworthy of thee, if upon further acquaintance I had not found it a very hearty outside—ay, and in my eyes, a very good-looking one, and as fit to contain the milk of human-kindness that was in thee, as the husk of a cocoa. To show by one specimen the character of this man—I could never prevail on him to accept any acknowledgment of his kindness, greater than a set of tea-things, and a piece or two of old furniture, which I could not well carry away. I had, indeed, the pleasure of leaving him in possession of a room which I had papered ; but this was a thing unexpected, and which neither of us had supposed could be done. Had I been a prince, I would have forced on him a pension ; being a journalist, I made him accept an *Examiner* weekly, which he lived for some years to relish his Sunday pipe with.

This man, in the interval between my arrival and my introduction to the head-gaoler, had found means to give me further information respecting my condition, and to express the interest he took in it. I thought little of his offers at the time. He behaved with the greatest air of deference to his principal ; moving as fast as his body would allow him, to execute his least intimation ; and holding the candle to him while he read, with an obsequious zeal. But he had spoken to his wife about me, and his wife I found to be as great a curiosity as himself. Both were more like the romantic gaolers drawn in some of our modern plays,

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than real Horsemonger-lane palpabilities. The wife, in her person, was as light and fragile as the husband was sturdy. She had the nerves of a fine lady, and yet went through the most unpleasant duties with the patience of a martyr. Her voice and look seemed to plead for a softness like their own, as if a loud reply would have shattered her. Ill-health had made her a Methodist, but this did not hinder her from sympathizing with an invalid who was none, or from loving a husband who was as little of a saint as need be. Upon the whole, such an extraordinary couple, so apparently unsuitable, and yet so fitted for one another; so apparently vulgar on one side, and yet so naturally delicate on both; so misplaced in their situation, and yet for the good of others so admirably put there, I have never met with before or since.

It was the business of this woman to lock me up in my garret; but she did it so softly the first night, that I knew nothing of the matter. The night following, I thought I heard a gentle tampering with the lock. I tried it, and found it fastened. She heard me as she was going down-stairs, and said the next day, "Ah, sir, I thought I should have turned the key so as for you not to hear it; but I found you did." The whole conduct of this couple towards us, from first to last, was of a piece with this singular delicacy.

My bed was shortly put up, and I slept in my new room. It was on an upper story, and stood in a corner of the quadrangle, on the right hand as you enter the prison-gate. The windows (which had now been accommodated with glass, in addition to their "excellent shutters") were high up, and barred; but the room was large and airy, and there was a fireplace. It was intended to be a common room for the prisoners on that story; but the cells were then empty. The cells were ranged on either side of the arcade, of which the story is formed, and the room opened at the end of it. At night-time the door was locked; then another on the top of the staircase, then another on the middle of the staircase, then a fourth at the bottom, a fifth that shut up the little yard belonging to that quarter,

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and how many more, before you got out of the gates, I forget : but I do not exaggerate when I say there were ten or eleven. The first night I slept there, I listened to them, one after the other, till the weaker part of my heart died within me. Every fresh turning of the key seemed a malignant insult to my love of liberty. I was alone, and away from my family ; I, who to this day have never slept from home above a dozen weeks in my life. Furthermore, the reader will bear in mind that I was ill. With a great flow of natural spirits, I was subject to fits of nervousness, which had latterly taken a more continued shape. I felt one of them coming on, and having learned to anticipate and break the force of it by exercise, I took a stout walk by pacing backwards and forwards for the space of three hours. This threw me into a state in which rest, for rest's sake, became pleasant. I got hastily into bed, and slept without a dream till morning.

By the way, I never dreamt of prison but twice all the time I was there, and my dream was the same on both occasions. I fancied I was at the theatre, and that the whole house looked at me in surprise, as much as to say, "How could he get out of prison?"

I saw my wife for a few minutes after I entered the gaol, but she was not allowed on that day to stop longer. The next day she was with me for some hours. To say that she never reproached me for these and the like taxes upon our family prospects, is to say little. A world of comfort for me was in her face. There is a note in the fifth volume of my *Spenser*, which I was then reading, in these words :—"February 4th, 1813." The line to which it refers is this :—

"Much dearer be the things which come through hard distresse."

I now applied to the magistrates for permission to have my wife and children constantly with me, which was granted. Not so my request to move into the gaoler's house. Mr. Holme Sumner, on occasion of a petition from a subsequent prisoner, told the House of Commons that my room had a view over the Surrey hills, and that I was very well content with it. I could

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not feel obliged to him for this postliminous piece of enjoyment, especially when I remembered that he had done all in his power to prevent my removal out of the room, precisely (as it appeared to us) because it looked upon nothing but the felons, and because I was *not* contented. In fact, you could not see out of the windows at all, without getting on a chair; and then, all that you saw was the miserable men whose chains had been clanking from daylight. The perpetual sound of these chains wore upon my spirits in a manner to which my state of health allowed me reasonably to object. The yard, also, in which I took exercise, was very small. The gaoler proposed that I should be allowed to occupy apartments in his house, and walk occasionally in the prison garden; adding, that I should certainly die if I did not; and his opinion was seconded by that of the medical man. Mine host was sincere in this, if in nothing else. Telling us, one day, how warmly he had put it to the magistrates, and how he insisted that I should not survive, he turned round upon me, and, to the doctor's astonishment, added, "Nor, Mister, will you." I believe it was the opinion of many; but Mr. Holme Sumner argued otherwise; perhaps from his own sensations, which were sufficiently iron. Perhaps he concluded, also, like a proper old Tory, that if I did not think fit to flatter the magistrates a little, and play the courtier, my wants could not be very great. At all events, he came up one day with the rest of them, and after bowing to my wife, and piteously pinching the cheek of an infant in her arms, went down and did all he could to prevent our being comfortably situated.

The doctor then proposed that I should be removed into the prison infirmary; and this proposal was granted. Infirmary had, I confess, an awkward sound, even to my ears. I fancied a room shared with other sick persons, not the best fitted for companions; but the good-natured doctor (his name was Dixon) undeceived me. The infirmary was divided into four wards, with as many small rooms attached to them. The two upper wards were occupied, but the two on the floor



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had never been used : and one of these, not very providently (for I had not yet learned to think of money), I turned into a noble room. I papered the walls with a trellis of roses ; I had the ceiling coloured with clouds and sky ; the barred windows I screened with Venetian blinds ; and when my bookcases were set up with their busts, and flowers and a pianoforte made their appearance, perhaps there was not a handsomer room on that side the water. I took a pleasure, when a stranger knocked at the door, to see him come in and stare about him. The surprise on issuing from the Borough, and passing through the avenues of a gaol, was dramatic. Charles Lamb declared there was no other such room, except in a fairy tale.

But I possessed another surprise ; which was a garden. There was a little yard outside the room, railed off from another belonging to the neighbouring ward. This yard I shut in with green palings, adorned it with a trellis, bordered it with a thick bed of earth from a nursery, and even contrived to have a grass-plot. The earth I filled with flowers and young trees. There was an apple-tree, from which we managed to get a pudding the second year. As to my flowers, they were allowed to be perfect. Thomas Moore, who came to see me<sup>1</sup> with Lord Byron, told me he had seen no such heart's-ease. I bought the *Parnaso Italiano* while in prison, and used often to think of a passage in it, while looking at this miniature piece of horticulture :—

“ Mio picciol orto,  
A me sei vigna, e campo, e selva, e prato.”—BALDI.

“ My little garden,  
To me thou'rt vineyard, field, and meadow, and wood.”

Here I wrote and read in fine weather, sometimes under an awning. In autumn, my trellises were hung with scarlet-runners, which added to the flowery investment. I used to shut my eyes in my arm-chair, and affect to think myself hundreds of miles off.

But my triumph was in issuing forth of a morning.

[<sup>1</sup> In May, 1813.]

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A wicket out of the garden led into the large one belonging to the prison. The latter was only for vegetables; but it contained a cherry-tree, which I saw twice in blossom. I parcelled out the ground in my imagination into favourite districts. I made a point of dressing myself as if for a long walk; and then, putting on my gloves, and taking my book under my arm, stepped forth, requesting my wife not to wait dinner if I was too late. My eldest little boy,<sup>1</sup> to whom Lamb addressed some charming verses on the occasion, was my constant companion, and we used to play all sorts of juvenile games together. It was, probably, in dreaming of one of these games (but the words had a more touching effect on my ear) that he exclaimed one night in his sleep, "No: I'm not lost; I'm found." Neither he nor I were very strong at that time; but I have lived to see him a man of eight and forty; and wherever he is found, a generous hand and a great understanding will be found together.<sup>2</sup>

I entered prison the 3rd of February, 1813, and removed to my new apartments the 16th of March, happy to get out of the noise of the chains. When I sat amidst my books, and saw the imaginary sky overhead, and my paper roses about me, I drank in the quiet at my ears, as if they were thirsty. The little room was my bed-

[<sup>1</sup> Thornton Leigh Hunt (1810-1873). Hunt's eldest child, and editor of the second edition of his father's *Autobiography* (1860), and of the *Correspondence* (1862). Lamb's verses entitled "To T. L. H. A child" appeared in his collected *Works*, 2 vols. 1818.]

[<sup>2</sup> A kind relative supplies an anecdote of this period. "Mrs. Leigh Hunt, having occasion to make some purchases in town, went, accompanied by her sister, and by this little boy, then in petticoats. She returned in a coach; and when it stopped at the prison gates, the driver opened the coach-door, and, apologizing for the liberty he was taking, said that, as it seemed unlikely that ladies should be visiting any one *else* in that prison, he presumed we came to see Mr. Leigh Hunt. When answered that he spoke to Mrs. Hunt, he became agitated, asked her if that was her child, and, learning that it was, he caught the child up in his arms and kissed it passionately. He explained his agitation by saying, that what Mr. Leigh Hunt had said about military flogging, had been the means of saving his son from the infliction; and that he should for ever bless his name. He would not hear of taking any payment. This circumstance was naturally most grateful to Mr. Leigh Hunt's feelings. He had suffered for his advocacy of the soldier's cause; but he had not suffered in vain."—T. H.]

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room. I afterwards made the two rooms change characters, when my wife lay in. Permission for her continuance with me at that period was easily obtained of the magistrates, among whom a new-comer made his appearance. This was another good-natured man, Lord Leslie, afterwards Earl of Rothes.<sup>1</sup> He heard me with kindness ; and his actions did not belie his countenance. My eldest girl (now, alas ! no more) was born in prison. She was beautiful, and for the greatest part of an existence of thirty years, she was happy. She was christened Mary after my mother, and Florimel after one of Spenser's heroines. But Mary we called her. Never shall I forget my sensations when she came into the world ; for I was obliged to play the physician myself, the hour having taken us by surprise. But her mother found many unexpected comforts : and during the whole time of her confinement, which happened to be in very fine weather, the garden door was set open, and she looked upon trees and flowers. A thousand recollections rise within me at every fresh period of my imprisonment, such as I cannot trust myself with dwelling upon.

These rooms, and the visits of my friends, were the bright side of my captivity. I read verses without end, and wrote almost as many. I had also the pleasure of hearing that my brother had found comfortable rooms in Coldbath-fields, and a host who really deserved that name as much as a gaoler could. The first year of my imprisonment was a long pull up-hill ; but never was metaphor so literally verified as by the sensation at the turning of the second. In the first year, all the prospect was that of the one coming : in the second, the days began to be scored off, like those of children at school preparing for a holiday. When I was fairly settled in my new apartments, the gaoler could hardly give sufficient vent to his spleen at my having escaped his clutches, his astonishment was so great. Besides, though I treated him handsomely, he had a little lurking fear of the *Examiner* upon him ; so he contented

<sup>1</sup> George William, twelfth earl of that name. He died a few years afterwards.

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himself with getting as much out of me as he could, and boasting of the grand room which he would fain have prevented my enjoying.

My friends were allowed to be with me till ten o'clock at night, when the under-turnkey, a young man with his lantern, and much ambitious gentility of deportment, came to see them out. I believe we scattered an urbanity about the prison, till then unknown. Even William Hazlitt, who there first did me the honour of a visit, would stand interchanging amenities at the threshold, which I had great difficulty in making him pass. I know not which kept his hat off with the greater pertinacity of deference, I to the diffident cutter-up of Tory dukes and kings, or he to the amazing prisoner and invalid who issued out of a bower of roses. There came my old friends and school-fellows, Pitman, whose wit and animal spirits have still kept him alive; Mitchell, now no more, who translated Aristophanes; and Barnes, gone too, who always reminded me of Fielding. It was he that introduced me to the late Mr. Thomas Alsager,<sup>1</sup> the kindest of neighbours, a man of business, who contrived to be a scholar and a musician. Alsager loved his leisure, and yet would start up at a moment's notice to do the least of a prisoner's biddings.

My now old friend, Cowden Clarke,<sup>2</sup> with his ever young and wise heart, was good enough to be his own introducer, paving his way, like a proper investor of prisons, with baskets of fruit.

The Lambs came to comfort me in all weathers, hail or sunshine, in daylight and in darkness, even in the dreadful frost and snow of the beginning of 1814.

My physician, curiously enough, was Dr. Knighton<sup>3</sup> (afterwards Sir William), who had lately become physician to the prince. He, therefore, could not, in decency, visit me under the circumstances, though he did again afterwards, never failing in the delicacies due

[<sup>1</sup> Thomas Massa Alsager (d. 1846) was on the staff of the *Times* newspaper, for which he wrote the money and musical articles.]

[<sup>2</sup> Charles Cowden Clarke (1787-1877), married Mary Novello, the daughter of the musician Vincent Novello, another of Hunt's friends.]

[<sup>3</sup> Sir William Knighton, Bart. (d. 1836).]



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either to his great friend or to his small. Meantime, another of his friends, the late estimable Dr. Gooch,<sup>1</sup> came to me as his substitute, and he came often.

Great disappointment and exceeding viciousness may talk as they please of the badness of human nature. For my part, I am now in my seventy-fourth year, and I have seen a good deal of the world, the dark side as well as the light, and I say that human nature is a very good and kindly thing, and capable of all sorts of virtues. Art thou not a refutation of all that can be said against it, excellent Sir John Swinburne?<sup>2</sup> another friend whom I made in prison, and who subsequently cheered some of my greatest passes of adversity. Health, as well as sense and generosity, has blessed him; and he retains a young heart at the age of ninety-four.

To evils I have owed some of my greatest blessings. It was imprisonment that brought me acquainted with my friend of friends, Shelley. I had seen little of him before; but he wrote to me, making me a princely offer, which at that time I stood in no need of.

Some other persons, not at all known to us, offered to raise money enough to pay the fine of 1,000*l*. We declined it, with proper thanks; and it became us to do so. But, as far as my own feelings were concerned, I have no merit; for I was destitute, at that time, of even a proper instinct with regard to money. It was not long afterwards that I was forced to call upon friendship for its assistance; and nobly (as I shall show by and by) was it afforded me.

To some other friends, near and dear, I may not even return thanks in this place for a thousand nameless attentions, which they make it a business of their existence to bestow on those they love. I might as soon thank my own heart. But one or two others, whom I have not seen for years, and who by some possibility (if, indeed, they ever think it worth their while to fancy anything on the subject) might suppose themselves forgotten, I may be suffered to remind of the pleasure they gave

[<sup>1</sup> John Mason Gooch, M.D.]

[<sup>2</sup> Sir John Edward Swinburne, 6th Bart. (1762-1860), to whom Leigh Hunt dedicated his volume of poems, *Foliage*, 1818.]



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me. M. S. [Michael Slegg?], who afterwards saw us so often near London, has long, I hope, been enjoying the tranquillity he so richly deserved; and so, I trust, has C. S. [Caroline Scott?], whose face, or rather something like it (for it was not easy to match her own), I continually met with afterwards in the land of her ancestors. Her veil, and her baskets of flowers, used to come through the portal, like light.

I must not omit a visit from the venerable Bentham,<sup>1</sup> who was justly said to unite the wisdom of a sage with the simplicity of a child. I had had the honour of one from him before my imprisonment, when he came, he said, to make my acquaintance, because the *Examiner* had spoken well of a new weekly paper. On the present occasion he found me playing at battledore, in which he took a part; and, with his usual eye towards improvement, suggested an amendment in the constitution of shuttlecocks. I remember the surprise of the governor at his local knowledge and his vivacity. "Why, Mister," said he, "his eye is everywhere at once."

All these comforts were embittered by unceasing ill-health, and by certain melancholy reveries, which the nature of the place did not help to diminish. During the first six weeks the sound of the felons' chains, mixed with what I took for horrid execrations or despairing laughter, was never out of my ears. When I went into the infirmary, which stood between the gaol and the prison walls, gallowses were occasionally put in order by the side of my windows, and afterwards set up over the prison gates, where they remained visible. The keeper one day with an air of mystery took me into the upper ward for the purpose, he said, of gratifying me with a view of the country from the roof. Something prevented his showing me this; but the spectacle he did show me I shall never forget. It was a stout country girl, sitting in an absorbed manner, her eyes fixed on the fire. She was handsome, and had a little hectic spot in either cheek, the effect of some gnawing emotion. He told me in a whisper that

[<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Bentham (1747-8-1832), the political economist.]

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she was there for the murder of her bastard child. I could have knocked the fellow down for his unfeelingness in making a show of her; but, after all, she did not see us. She heeded us not. There was no object before her but what produced the spot in her cheek. The gallows, on which she was executed, must have been brought out within her hearing; but, perhaps, she heard that as little.

To relieve the reader's feelings I will here give him another instance of the delicacy of my friend the under-gaoler. He always used to carry up her food to this poor girl himself; because, as he said, he did not think it a fit task for younger men.

This was a melancholy case. In general, the crimes were not of such a staggering description, nor did the criminals appear to take their situation to heart. I found by degrees that fortune showed fairer play than I had supposed to all classes of men, and that those who seemed to have most reason to be miserable were not always so. Their criminality was generally proportioned to their want of thought. My friend Cave, who had become a philosopher by the force of his situation, said to me one day when a new batch of criminals came in, "Poor ignorant wretches, sir!" At evening, when they went to bed, I used to stand in the prison garden, listening to the cheerful songs with which the felons entertained one another. The beaters of hemp were a still merrier race. Doubtless the good hours and simple fare of the prison contributed to make the blood of its inmates run better, particularly those who were forced to take exercise. At last, I used to pity the debtors more than the criminals; yet even the debtors had their gay parties and jolly songs. Many a time (for they were my neighbours) have I heard them roar out the old ballad in Beaumont and Fletcher:—

"He that drinks, and goes to bed sober,  
Falls as the leaves do, and dies in October."

To say the truth, there was an obstreperousness in their mirth that looked more melancholy than the thoughtlessness of the lighter-feeding felons.

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On the 3rd of February, 1815, I was free. When my family, the preceding summer, had been obliged to go down to Brighton for their health, I felt ready to dash my head against the wall at not being able to follow them. I would sometimes sit in my chair with this thought upon me, till the agony of my impatience burst out at every pore. I would not speak of it if it did not enable me to show how this kind of suffering may be borne, and in what sort of way it terminates. I learnt to prevent it by violent exercise. All fits of nervousness ought to be anticipated as much as possible with exercise. Indeed, a proper healthy mode of life would save most people from these effeminate ills, and most likely cure even their inheritors.

It was now thought that I should dart out of my cage like a bird, and feel no end in the delight of ranging. But, partly from ill-health, and partly from habit, the day of my liberation brought a good deal of pain with it. An illness of a long standing, which required very different treatment, had by this time been burnt in upon me by the iron that enters into the soul of the captive, wrap it in flowers as he may; and I am ashamed to say, that after stopping a little at the house of my friend Alsager, I had not the courage to continue looking at the shoals of people passing to and fro, as the coach drove up the Strand. The whole business of life seemed a hideous impertinence. The first pleasant sensation I experienced was when the coach turned into the New Road, and I beheld the old hills of my affection standing where they used to do, and breathing me a welcome.

It was very slowly that I recovered anything like a sensation of health. The bitterest evil I suffered was in consequence of having been confined so long in one spot. The habit stuck to me on my return home in a very extraordinary manner; and, I fear, some of my friends thought me ungrateful. They did me an injustice; but it was not their fault; nor could I wish them the bitter experience which alone makes us acquainted with the existence of strange things. This weakness I outlived; but I have never thoroughly recovered the shock given my constitution. My natural

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spirits, however, have always struggled hard to see me reasonably treated. Many things give me exquisite pleasure which seem to affect other men in a very minor degree; and I enjoyed, after all, such happy moments with my friends, even in prison, that in the midst of the beautiful climate which I afterwards visited, I was sometimes in doubt whether I would not rather have been in gaol than in Italy.

### CHAPTER XV

#### FREE AGAIN.—SHELLEY IN ENGLAND

[1815, 1816.]

ON leaving prison I went to live in the Edgware Road, because my brother's house was in the neighbourhood. When we met, we rushed into each other's arms, and tears of manhood bedewed our cheeks.

Not that the idea of the Prince Regent had anything to do with such grave emotions. His Royal Highness continued to affect us with anything but solemnity, as we took care to make manifest in the *Examiner*. We had a hopeful and respectful word for every reigning prince but himself; and I must say, that with the exception of the Emperor Alexander, not one of them deserved it.

The lodging which my family occupied (for the fine, and the state of my health, delayed my resumption of a house) was next door to a wealthy old gentleman, who kept a handsome carriage, and spoke very bad grammar. My landlord, who was also a dignified personage after his fashion, pointed him out to me one day as he was getting into his carriage; adding, in a tone amounting to the awful, "He is the greatest plumber in London." The same landlord, who had a splendid turn for anti-climax, and who had gifted his children with names proportionate to his paternal sense of what became him, called out to one of them from his parlour window, "You, sir, there—Maximilian—



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come out of the gutter." He was a good-natured sort of domineering individual; and would say to his wife, when he went out, "Damn it, my love, I insist on having the pudding."

In this house Lord Byron continued the visits which he made me in prison. Unfortunately, I was too ill to return them. He pressed me very much to go to the theatre with him; but illness, and the dread of committing my critical independence, alike prevented me. His lordship was one of a management that governed Drury-lane Theatre at that time, and that were not successful. He got nothing by it but petty vexations and a good deal of scandal.

Lord Byron's appearance at that time was the finest I ever saw it.<sup>1</sup> He was fatter than before his marriage, but only just enough so to complete the elegance of his person; and the turn of his head and countenance had a spirit and elevation in it which, though not unmixed with disquiet, gave him altogether a very noble look. His dress, which was black, with white trousers, and which he wore buttoned close over the body, completed the succinctness and gentlemanliness of his appearance. I remember one day, as he stood looking out of the window, he resembled, in a lively manner, the portrait of him by Phillips, by far the best that has appeared: I mean, the best of him at his best time of life, and the most like him in features as well as expression. He sat one morning so long that Lady Byron sent up twice to let him know she was waiting. Her ladyship used to go on in the carriage to Henderson's nursery-ground, to get flowers. I had not the honour of knowing her, nor ever saw her but once, when I caught a glimpse of her at the door. I thought she had a pretty, earnest look, with her "pippin" face; an epithet by which she playfully designated herself.

I had a little study overlooking the fields to Westbourne—a sequestered spot at that time embowered in trees. The study was draped with white and green, having furniture to match; and as the noble

[<sup>1</sup> In 1815 Byron was 27.]





Lord Byron.  
After the picture by G. Phillips R.A.



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poet had seen me during my imprisonment in a bower of roses, he might here be said, with no great stretch of imagination, to have found me in a box of lilies. I mention this, because he took pleasure in the look of the little apartment. Also, because my wife's fair cousin, Virtue Kent, now, alas ! no more, who was as good as she was intelligent, and as resolute as gentle, extinguished me there one morning when my dressing-gown had caught fire. She was all her life, indeed, taking painful tasks on herself, to save trouble to others.

In a room at the end of the garden to this house was a magnificent rocking-horse, which a friend had given my little boy ; and Lord Byron, with a childish glee becoming a poet, would ride upon it. Ah ! why did he ever ride his Pegasus to less advantage ? Poets should never give up their privilege of surmounting sorrow with joy.

It was here also I had the honour of a visit from Mr. Wordsworth. He came to thank me for the zeal I had shown in advocating the cause of his genius. I had the pleasure of showing him his book on my shelves by the side of Milton ; a sight which must have been the more agreeable, inasmuch as the visit was unexpected. He favoured me, in return, with giving his opinion of some of the poets his contemporaries, who would assuredly not have paid him a visit on the same grounds on which he was pleased to honour myself. Nor do I believe, that from that day to this, he thought it becoming in him to reciprocate the least part of any benefit which a word in good season may have done for him. Lord Byron, in resentment for my having called him the "prince of the bards of his time," would not allow him to be even the "one-eyed monarch of the blind." He said he was the "blind monarch of the one-eyed." I must still differ with his lordship on that point ; but I must own, that, after all which I have seen and read, posterity, in my opinion, will differ not a little with one person respecting the amount of merit to be ascribed to Mr. Wordsworth ; though who that one person is, I shall leave the reader to discover.

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Mr. Wordsworth, whom Mr. Hazlitt designated as one that would have had the wide circle of his humanities made still wider, and a good deal more pleasant, by dividing a little more of his time between his lakes in Westmoreland and the hotels of the metropolis, had a dignified manner, with a deep and roughish but not unpleasing voice, and an exalted mode of speaking. He had a habit of keeping his left hand in the bosom of his waistcoat; and in this attitude, except when he turned round to take one of the subjects of his criticism from the shelves (for his contemporaries were there also), he sat dealing forth his eloquent but hardly catholic judgments. In his "father's house" there were not "many mansions." He was as sceptical on the merits of all kinds of poetry but one, as Richardson was on those of the novels of Fielding.

Under the study in which my visitor and I were sitting was an archway, leading to a nursery-ground; a cart happened to go through it while I was inquiring whether he would take any refreshment; and he uttered, in so lofty a voice, the words, "Anything which is *going forward*," that I felt inclined to ask him whether he would take a piece of the cart. Lamb would certainly have done it. But this was a levity which would neither have been so proper on my part, after so short an acquaintance, nor very intelligible, perhaps, in any sense of the word, to the serious poet. There are good-humoured warrants for smiling, which lie deeper even than Mr. Wordsworth's thoughts for tears.

I did not see this distinguished person again till thirty years afterwards; when, I should venture to say, his manner was greatly superior to what it was in the former instance; indeed, quite natural and noble, with a cheerful air of animal as well as spiritual confidence; a gallant bearing, curiously reminding me of the Duke of Wellington, as I saw him walking some eighteen years ago by a lady's side, with no unbecoming oblivion of his time of life. I observed, also, that the poet no longer committed himself in scornful criticisms, or, indeed, in any criticisms whatever, at least as far as I knew. He had found out that he could, at

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least, afford to be silent. Indeed, he spoke very little of anything. The conversation turned upon Milton, and I fancied I had opened a subject that would have "brought him out," by remarking, that the most diabolical thing in all *Paradise Lost* was a feeling attributed to the angels. "Ay!" said Mr. Wordsworth, and inquired what it was. I said it was the passage in which the angels, when they observed Satan journeying through the empyrean, let down a set of steps out of heaven, on purpose to add to his misery—to his despair of ever being able to re-ascend them; they being angels in a state of bliss, and he a fallen spirit doomed to eternal punishment. The passage is as follows:—

"Each stair was meant mysteriously, nor stood  
There always, but, drawn up to heaven, sometimes  
Viewless; and underneath a bright sea flow'd  
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon  
Who after came from earth sailing arriv'd  
Wafted by angels, or flew o'er the lake  
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.  
The stairs were then let down, whether to dare  
The fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate  
*His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss.*"

Mr. Wordsworth pondered, and said nothing. I thought to myself, what pity for the poor devil would not good uncle Toby have expressed! Into what indignation would not Burns have exploded! What knowledge of themselves would not have been forced upon those same coxcombical and malignant angels by Fielding or Shakspeare!

Walter Scott said, that the eyes of Burns were the finest he ever saw. I cannot say the same of Mr. Wordsworth's; that is, not in the sense of the beautiful, or even of the profound. But certainly I never beheld eyes that looked so inspired or supernatural. They were like fires half burning, half smouldering, with a sort of acrid fixture of regard, and seated at the further end of two caverns. One might imagine Ezekiel or Isaiah to have had such eyes. The finest eyes, in every sense of the word, which I have ever seen in a man's head (and I have seen many fine ones) are those of Thomas Carlyle.



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It was for a good while after leaving prison that I was unable to return the visits of the friends who saw me there. Two years' confinement, and illness in combination, had acted so injuriously upon a sensitive temperament, that for many months I could not leave home without a morbid wish to return, and a fear of being seized with some fit or other in the streets, perhaps with sudden death; and this was one of the periods when my hypochondria came back. In company, however, or at the sight of a friend, animal spirits would struggle even with that; and few people, whatever ill-health I showed in my face, had the slightest idea of what I suffered. When they thought I was simply jaundiced, I was puzzling myself with the cosmogony. When they fancied me wholly occupied in some conversation on a poem or a pot of flowers, I would be haunted with the question respecting the origin of evil. What agonies, to be sure—what horrible struggles between wonder and patience—I suffered then! and into what a heaven of reliance and of gladness have I been since brought by a little better knowledge of the tuning of the instruments of this existence, whether bodily or mental, taking right healthy spirits as the key-note, and harmonizing everything else with those! But I have treated this point already. Let me again, however, advise any one who may be suffering melancholy of the same sort, or of any sort, to take this recollection of mine to heart, and do his best to derive comfort from it. I thought I should die early, and in suffering; and here I am still, forty-two years afterwards, writing these words.

“For thilkè ground, that beareth the weeds wick,  
Beareth also these wholesome herbs as oft;  
And next to the foul nettle, rough and thick,  
The rose ywaxeth sweet, and smooth, and soft;  
And next the valley is the hill aloft;  
And next the darkè night is the glad morrow,  
And also joy is next the fine of sorrow.”—CHAUCER.

In the spring of the year 1816 I went to reside again in Hampstead, for the benefit of the air, and of my old field walks; and there I finished the *Story of*

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*Rimini*, which was forthwith published. I have spoken of a masque on the downfall of Napoleon, called the *Descent of Liberty*,<sup>1</sup> which I wrote while in prison. Liberty descends in it from heaven, to free the earth from the burthen of an evil magician. It was a compliment to the Allies, which they deserved well enough, inasmuch as it was a failure; otherwise they did not deserve it at all; for it was founded on a belief in promises which they never kept. There was a vein of something true in the *Descent of Liberty*, particularly in passages where the domestic affections were touched upon; but the poetry was too much on the surface. Fancy (encouraged by the allegorical nature of the masque) played her part too entirely in it at the expense of imagination. I had not yet got rid of self-sufficiency caused by my editorial position, or by the credit, better deserved, which political courage had obtained for me. I had yet to learn in what the subtler spirit of poetry consisted.

Nor had I discovered it when I wrote the *Story of Rimini*. It was written in what, perhaps, at my time of life, and after the degree of poetical reputation which had been conceded me, I may be allowed, after the fashion of painters, to call my "first manner"; not the worst manner conceivable, though far from the best; as far from it (or at whatever greater distance modesty may require it to be put) as Dryden's *Flower and the Leaf*, from the story in Chaucer which Dryden imitated. I must take leave, however, to regard it as a true picture, painted after a certain mode; and I can never forget the comfort I enjoyed in painting it, though I think I have since executed some things with a more inward perception of poetical requirement.

This poem, the greater part of which was written in prison, had been commenced a year or two before, while I was visiting the sea-coast at Hastings, with my wife and our first child. I was very happy; and looking among my books for some melancholy theme of verse, by which I could steady my felicity, I unfortun-

[<sup>1</sup> The *Descent of Liberty*, a mask, 1815. The dedication to Thomas Barnes is dated, "Surrey Jail, 10th July, 1814."]

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ately chose the subject of Dante's famous episode. I did not consider, indeed at the time was not critically aware, that to enlarge upon a subject which had been treated with exquisite sufficiency, and to his immortal renown, by a great master, was not likely, by any merit of detail, to save a tyro in the art from the charge of presumption, especially one who had not yet even studied poetical mastery itself, except in a subordinate shape. Dryden, at that time, in spite of my sense of Milton's superiority, and my early love of Spenser, was the most delightful name to me in English poetry. I had found in him more vigour, and music too, than in Pope, who had been my closest poetical acquaintance; and I could not rest till I had played on his instrument. I brought, however, to my task a sympathy with the tender and the pathetic, which I did not find in my pattern; and there was also an impulsive difference now and then in the style, and a greater tendency to simplicity of words. My versification was far from being so vigorous as his. There were many weak lines in it. It succeeded best in catching the variety of his cadences; at least so far as they broke up the monotony of Pope. But I had a greater love for the beauties of external nature; I think also I partook of a more southern insight into the beauties of colour, of which I made abundant use in the procession which is described in the first canto; and if I invested my story with too many circumstances of description, especially on points not essential to its progress, and thus took leave *in toto* of the brevity, as well as the force of Dante, still the enjoyment which led me into the superfluity was manifest, and so far became its warrant. I had the pleasure of supplying my friendly critic, Lord Byron, with a point for his *Parisina* (the incident of the heroine talking in her sleep); of seeing all the reigning poets, without exception, break up their own heroic couplets into freer modulation (which they never afterwards abandoned); and of being paid for the resentment of the Tory critics in one single sentence from the lips of Mr. Rogers, who told me, when I met him for the first

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time at Lord Byron's house, that he had "just left a beautiful woman sitting over my poem in tears."

I was then between twenty and thirty. Upwards of thirty years afterwards I was told by a friend, that he had just heard one of the most distinguished of living authoresses say she had shed "tears of vexation" on finding that I had recast the conclusion of the poem, and taken away so much of the first matter. Let it be allowed me to boast of tears of this kind, and to say what balm they had given me for many a wound. The portion of the poem taken away I have since restored, under a separate title, in the edition of my *Poetical Works*, which has appeared in America. By the other alteration I have finally thought it best to abide; and I have thus reconciled as well as I could the friends of the first form of the poem and those of the new.

I need hardly advert, at the present time of day, to the objections which were made to this production when it first appeared, by the wrath of the Tory critics. In fact, it would have met with no such hostility, or indeed any hostility at all, if politics had not judged it. Critics might have differed about it, of course, and reasonably have found fault; but had it emanated from the circles, or been written by any person not obnoxious to political objection, I believe there is nobody at this time of day, who will not allow, that the criticism in all quarters would have been very good-natured, and willing to hail whatever merit it possessed. I may, therefore, be warranted in having spoken of it without any greater allusion to quarrels which have long been over, and to which I have confessed that I gave the first cause of provocation.

The *Story of Rimini* had not long appeared when I received a copy of it, which looked like witchcraft. It was the identical poem, in type and appearance, bound in calf, and sent me without any explanation; but it was a little smaller. I turned it over a dozen times, wondering what it could be, and how it could have originated. The simple solution of the puzzle I did not consider, till I had summoned other persons to partake



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my astonishment. At length we consulted the title-page, and there saw the names of "Wells and Lilly, Boston; and M. Carey, Philadelphia."—I thought how the sight would have pleased my father and mother.

I now returned the visits which Lord Byron had made me in prison. His wife's separation from him had just taken place, and he had become ill himself; his face was jaundiced with bile; he felt the attacks of the public severely; and, to crown all, he had an execution in his house. I was struck with the real trouble he manifested, compared with what the public thought of it. The adherence of his old friends was also touching. I saw Mr. Hobhouse, now Lord Broughton, and Mr. Scrope Davies (college friends of his) almost every time I called. Mr. Rogers was regular in his daily visits; and Lord Holland, he told me, was very kind.

Lord Byron, at this juncture, took the blame of the quarrel upon himself. He even enlisted the self-love of his new visitor so far on the lady's side, as to tell him "that she liked my poem, and had compared his temper to that of Giovanni, the heroine's consort." He also showed me a letter which she had written him after her departure from the house, and when she was on her way to the relations who persuaded her not to return. It was signed with the epithet before mentioned; and was written in a spirit of good-humour, and even of fondness, which, though containing nothing but what a wife ought to write, and is the better for writing, was, I thought, almost too good to show. But a certain over-communicativeness was one of those qualities of his lordship, which, though it sometimes became the child-like simplicity of a poet, startled you at others in proportion as it led to disclosures of questionable propriety.

I thought I understood the circumstances of this separation at the time, and still better some time afterwards; but I have since been convinced, and the conviction grows stronger every day, that no domestic dispute, even if it were desirable or proper to investigate it, can ever be thoroughly understood unless you



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hear both parties, and know their entire relative situations, together with the interests and passions of those about them. You must also be sure of their statements, and see whether the statements on all sides themselves are prejudiced or the reverse. Indeed you cannot know individuals themselves truly, unless you have lived with them; at all events, unless you have studied them long enough to know whether appearances are realities; and although you may, and to a certain degree must, draw your own conclusions respecting people from statements which they give to the world, whether for or against themselves, yet it is safer, as well as pleasanter, to leave that question as much as possible in the place where it ought ever to abide, unless brought forward on the highest and noblest grounds; namely, in the silence of the heart that has most suffered under its causes.

I shall, therefore, say nothing more of a business which nobody ought to have heard of. Lord Byron soon afterwards left England,<sup>1</sup> and I did not see him again, or hear from him, scarcely of him, till he proposed my joining him in Italy. I take my leave of him, therefore, till that period, and proceed to speak of the friends with whom I became intimate in the meanwhile—Shelley and Keats.<sup>2</sup>

I first saw Shelley during the early period of the *Examiner*, before its indictment on account of the Regent; but it was only for a few short visits, which did not produce intimacy. [It was indeed Mr. Rowland Hunter who first brought Leigh Hunt and his most valued friend personally together. Shelley had brought a manuscript poem which proved by no means suited to the publishing house in St. Paul's Churchyard. But Mr. Hunter sent the young reformer to seek the counsel of Leigh Hunt.—T. H.] He was then a youth,

[<sup>1</sup> On April 25, 1816.]

[<sup>2</sup> In the *Examiner* for December 1, 1816, there appeared an article by Leigh Hunt entitled, "Young Poets," dealing with the poetry of Shelley (who had just published his *Alastor*), J. H. Reynolds and John Keats. In this article Keats' sonnet on Chapman's *Homer* is printed for the first time.]

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not come to his full growth; very gentlemanly, earnestly gazing at every object that interested him, and quoting the Greek dramatists. Not long afterwards he married his first wife; and he subsequently wrote to me while I was in prison, as I have before mentioned. I renewed the correspondence a year or two afterwards during which period one of the earliest as well as most beautiful of his lyric poems, the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, had appeared in the *Examiner*. Meantime, he and his wife had parted; and now he re-appeared before me at Hampstead,<sup>1</sup> in consequence of the calamity which I am about to mention.

But this circumstance it will be proper to introduce with some remarks, and a little previous biography.

It is hardly necessary to inform the reader at this present day, that Percy Bysshe Shelley was the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart., of Castle-Goring, in Sussex. He was born at Field Place, in that county, the 4th of August, 1792.

It is difficult, under any circumstances, to speak with proper delicacy of the living connections of the dead; but it is no violation of decorum to observe, that the family connections of Mr. Shelley belonged to a small party in the House of Commons, itself belonging to another party. They were Whig Aristocrats, voting in the interests of the Duke of Norfolk. To a man of genius, endowed with a metaphysical acuteness to discern the truth and falsehood, and a strong sensibility to give way to his sense of it, such an origin, however respectable in the ordinary point of view, was not the very luckiest that could have happened for the purpose of keeping him within ordinary bounds. With what feelings is Truth to open its eyes upon this world among the most respectable of our mere party gentry? Among licensed contradictions of all sorts? among the Christian doctrines and the worldly practices? Among foxhunters and their chaplains? among beneficed loungers, rakish old gentlemen, and more startling

[<sup>1</sup> Shelley renewed his acquaintance with Leigh Hunt in November, 1816, and visited the latter at the Vale of Health, Hampstead, where he had gone to live in the spring of that year.]

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young ones, who are old in the folly of *knowingness*? people not indeed bad in themselves; not so bad as their wholesale and unthinking decriers, much less their hypocritical decriers; many excellent by nature, but spoilt by those professed demands of what is right and noble, and those inculcations, at the same time, of what is false and wrong, which have been so admirably exposed by a late philosopher (Bentham), and which he has fortunately helped some of our best living statesmen to leave out of the catalogue of their ambitions.

Shelley began to think at a very early age, and to think, too, of these anomalies. He saw that at every step in life some compromise was expected between a truth which he was told not to violate, and a colouring and double-meaning of it which forced him upon the violation.

With this jumble, then, of truth and falsehood in his head, and a genius born to detect it, Shelley was sent to Eton, and afterwards to the University of Oxford. At Eton a Reviewer recollected him setting trees on fire with a burning-glass; a proceeding which the critic set down to his natural taste for destruction. Perhaps the same Reviewer (if we are not mistaken as to the person) would now, by the help of his own riper faculties, attribute it to the natural curiosity of genius. At the same school, the young reformer rose up in opposition to the system of fagging. Against this custom he formed a conspiracy; and for a time he made it pause, at least as far as his own person was concerned. His feelings at this period of his life are touchingly and powerfully described in the dedication of the *Revolt of Islam*.

“Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear friend, when first  
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.  
I do remember well the hour which burst  
My spirit's sleep: a fresh May day it was,  
When I walk'd forth upon the glittering grass,  
And wept, I know not why, until there rose  
From the near schoolroom, voices that, alas!  
Were but one echo from a world of woes—  
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

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“And then I clasp’d my hands, and look’d around,—  
But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,  
Which pour’d their warm drops on the sunny ground :  
So without shame I spake : ‘I will be wise,  
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies  
Such power ; for I grow weary to behold  
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize  
Without reproach or check.’ I then controll’d  
My tears ; my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

“And from that hour did I, with earnest thought,  
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore ;  
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught  
I cared to learn ; but from that secret store  
Wrought linkèd armour for my soul, before  
It might walk forth to war among mankind.”

Shelley, I believe, was taken from Eton before the regular period for leaving school. His unconventional spirit—penetrating, sincere, and demanding the reason and justice of things—was found to be inconvenient. At Oxford it was worse. Logic was there put into his hands ; and he used it in the most uncompromising manner. The more important the proposition, the more he thought himself bound to investigate it : the greater the demand upon his assent, the less, upon their own principle of reasoning, he thought himself bound to grant it : for the university, by its ordinances, invited scholars to ask questions which they found themselves unable to answer. Shelley did so ;<sup>1</sup> and the answer was expulsion. It is true, the question he asked was a very hard one. It was upon the existence of God. But could neither Faith, Hope, nor Charity find a better answer than that ? and in the teeth, too, of their own challenge to inquiry ? Could not some gentle and loving nature have been found to speak to him in private, and beg him at least to consider and pause over the question, for reasons which might have had their corresponding effect ? The Church of England has been a blessing to mankind, inasmuch as it has discountenanced the worst superstitions, and given sense and improvement leave to grow ; but if it cannot learn

[<sup>1</sup> The immediate cause of Shelley’s expulsion from Oxford was the circulation of his tract, entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*, 1811.]



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still further to sacrifice letter to spirit, and see the danger of closing its lips on the greatest occasions and then proceeding to open them on the smallest, and dispute with its very self on points the most "frivolous and vexatious," it will do itself an injury it little dreams of with the new and constantly growing intelligence of the masses; who are looking forward to the noblest version of Christianity, while their teachers are thus fighting about the meanest.

Conceive a young man of Mr. Shelley's character, with no better experience of the kindness and sincerity of those whom he had perplexed, thus thrown forth into society, to form his own judgments, and pursue his own career. It was *Emilius out in the World*, but formed by his own tutorship. There is a novel, under that title, written by the German La Fontaine, which has often reminded me of him. The hero of another, by the same author, called the *Reprobate*, still more resembles him. His way of proceeding was entirely after the fashion of those guileless, but vehement hearts, which not being well replied to by their teachers, and finding them hostile to inquiry, add to a natural love of truth all the passionate ardour of a generous and devoted protection of it. Shelley had met with Godwin's *Political Justice*, and he seemed to breathe, for the first time, in an open and bright atmosphere. He resolved to square all his actions by what he conceived to be the strictest justice, without any consideration for the opinions of those whose little exercise of that virtue towards himself ill fitted them, he thought, for better teachers, and as ill warranted him in deferring to the opinions of the world whom they guided. That he did some extraordinary things in consequence is admitted: that he did many noble ones, and all with sincerity, is well known to his friends, and will be admitted by all sincere persons. Let those who are so fond of exposing their own natures, by attributing every departure from ordinary conduct to bad motives, ask themselves what conduct could be more extraordinary in their eyes, and at the same time less attributable to a bad motive, than the rejection of an



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estate for the love of a principle? Yet Shelley rejected one. He had only to become a yea and nay man in the House of Commons, to be one of the richest men in Sussex. He declined it, and lived upon a comparative pittance. Even the fortune that he would ultimately have inherited, as secured to his person, was petty in the comparison.

So he went up to town. Had he now behaved himself pardonably in the eyes of the conventional in those days (for it is wonderful in how short a time honest discussion may be advanced by a court at once correct and unbigoted, and by a succession of calmly progressing ministries; and all classes are now beginning to permit the wisdom of every species of abuse to be doubted), Shelley would have gone to London with the resolution of sowing his wild oats, and becoming a decent member of society; that is to say, he would have seduced a few maid-servants, or at least haunted the lobbies of the theatre, and then bestowed the remnant of his constitution upon some young lady of his own rank in life, and settled into a proper church-and-king man of the old leaven, perhaps a member of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. This used to be the proper routine, and gave one a right to be didactic. Alas! Shelley did not do so; and bitterly had he to repent, not that he did not do it, but that he married <sup>1</sup> while yet a stripling, and that the wife whom he took was not of a nature to appreciate his understanding, or, perhaps, to come from contact with it uninjured in what she had of her own. They separated by mutual consent, after the birth of two children. To this measure his enemies would hardly have demurred; especially as the marriage was disapproved by the husband's family, and the lady was of inferior rank. It might have been regarded even as something like making amends. But to one thing they would strongly have objected. He proceeded, in the spirit of Milton's doctrines, to pay his court to another lady. I wish I could pursue the story in the same tone; but now came

[<sup>1</sup> Harriet Westbrook, whom he married at Edinburgh in August, 1811.]

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the greatest pang of his life. He was residing at Bath, when news came to him that his wife had destroyed herself. It was a heavy blow to him, and he never forgot it. For a time it tore his being to pieces; nor is there a doubt that, however deeply he was accustomed to reason on the nature and causes of evil, and on the steps necessary to be taken for opposing it, he was not without remorse for having no better exercised his judgment with regard to the degree of intellect he had allied himself with, and for having given rise to a premature independence of conduct in one unequal to the task. The lady was greatly to be pitied; so was the survivor. Let the collegiate refusers of argument, and the conventional sowers of their wild oats, with myriads of unhappy women behind them, rise up in judgment against him! Honester men will not be hindered from doing justice to sincerity wherever they find it; nor be induced to blast the memory of a man of genius and benevolence, for one painful passage in his life, which he might have avoided had he been no better than his calumniators.

On the death of his unfortunate lady, Shelley married the daughter<sup>1</sup> of Mr. Godwin, and resided at Great Marlow, in Buckinghamshire, where my family and myself paid him a visit, and where he was a blessing to the poor. His charity, though liberal, was not weak. He inquired personally into the circumstances of his petitioners, visited the sick in their beds (for he had gone the round of the hospitals on purpose to be able to practise on occasion), and kept a regular list of industrious poor, whom he assisted with small sums to make up their accounts.

Here he wrote the *Revolt of Islam*<sup>2</sup> and *A Proposal for putting Reform to the Vote through the Country*. He

<sup>1</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797-1851). She was buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's, Bournemouth, to which place the remains of her father and mother (William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft Goodwin) were removed from St. Pancras churchyard the same year. Her son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley, was buried in the same grave in 1889, and his wife Jane, Lady Shelley, in 1899.]

<sup>2</sup> *The Revolt of Islam*; a poem in twelve cantos, (1817) dated 1818, was originally entitled *Laon and Cythna; or, the Revolution of the*

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offered to give a tenth part of his income for a year towards the advancement of the project. He used to sit in a study adorned with casts, as large as life, of the Vatican Apollo and the celestial Venus. Betweenwhiles he would walk in the garden, or take strolls about the country, or a sail in a boat, a diversion of which he was passionately fond. Flowers, or the sight of a happy face, or the hearing of a congenial remark, would make his eyes sparkle with delight. At other times he would suddenly droop into an aspect of dejection, particularly when a wretched face passed him, or when he saw the miserable-looking children of a lace-making village near him, or when he thought of his own children, of whom he had been deprived by the Court of Chancery. He once said to me during a walk in the Strand, "Look at all these worn and miserable faces that pass us, and tell me what is to be thought of the world they appear in?" I said, "Ah, but these faces are not all worn with grief. You must take the wear and tear of pleasure into the account; of secret joys as well as sorrows; of merry-makings and sittings-up at night." He owned that there was truth in the remark. This was the sort of consolation which I was in the habit of giving him, and for which he was thankful, because I was sincere.

As to his children, the reader, perhaps, is not aware that in this country of England, so justly called free on many accounts, and so proud of its "Englishman's castle"—of the house which nothing can violate—a man's offspring can be taken from him to-morrow, who holds a different opinion from the Lord Chancellor in faith and morals. Hume's, if he had any, might have been taken. Gibbon's might have been taken. The virtuous Condorcet, if he had been an Englishman and a father, would have stood no chance. Plato, for his *Republic*, would have stood as little; and Mademoiselle

*Golden City: a vision of the Nineteenth Century, in the stanza of Spenser, 1818*, but after the issue of a few copies the publishers insisted on certain changes in the text, which necessitated an alteration in the title. *A Proposal for putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Country* was issued under the pseudonym of *The Hermit of Marlow* in 1817.]

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de Gournay might have been torn from the arms of her adopting father, Montaigne, convicted beyond redemption of seeing farther than the walls of the Court of Chancery. That such things are not done often, I believe: that they may be done oftener than people suspect, I believe also; for they are transacted with closed doors, and the details are forbidden to transpire.

*Queen Mab*,<sup>1</sup> Shelley's earliest poetical production, written before he was out of his teens, and regretted by him as a crude production, was published without his consent. Yet he was convicted from it of holding the opinion which his teachers at the University had not thought fit to reason him out of. He was also charged with not being of the received opinions with regard to the intercourse of the sexes; and his children, a girl and a boy, were taken from him. They were transferred to the care of a clergyman of the Church of England. The circumstance deeply affected Shelley: so much so, that he never afterwards dared to trust himself with mentioning their names in my hearing, though I had stood at his side throughout the business; probably for that reason.<sup>2</sup> Shelley's manner of life suffered greatly in its repute from this circumstance. He was said to be keeping a seraglio at Marlow; and his friends partook of the scandal. This keeper of a seraglio, who, in fact, was extremely difficult to be pleased in such matters, and who had no idea of love

[<sup>1</sup> *Queen Mab* was first printed for private circulation in 1813, when Shelley was 21. It was published some eight years later by a piratical bookseller. The author sought an injunction to suppress this edition, but he did not obtain it.]

<sup>2</sup> The boy is since dead; and Shelley's son by his second wife, the daughter of Godwin, has succeeded to the baronetcy.\* It seldom falls to the lot of a son to have illustrious descent so heaped upon him; his mother a woman of talents; his father a man of genius; his grandfather, Godwin, a writer secure of immortality; his grandmother, Godwin's wife, the celebrated Mary Wollstonecraft: and on the side of his father's ancestors he partakes of the blood of the intellectual as well as patrician family of the Sackvilles. But, what is best of all, his own intelligent and liberal nature makes him worthy of all this lustre.

[\* Sir Percy Florence Shelley, the 3rd Baronet (1819-1889), and the poet's last child. On attaining to the title at the death of his grandfather in 1844, he generously conferred an annuity of £120 on Leigh Hunt.]



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unconnected with sentiment, passed his days like a hermit. He rose early in the morning, walked and read before breakfast, took that meal sparingly, wrote and studied the greater part of the morning, walked and read again, dined on vegetables (for he took neither meat nor wine), conversed with his friends (to whom his house was ever open), again walked out, and usually finished with reading to his wife till ten o'clock, when he went to bed. This was his daily existence. His book was generally Plato, or Homer, or one of the Greek tragedians, or the Bible, in which last he took a great, though peculiar, and often admiring interest. One of his favourite parts was the book of Job. The writings attributed to Solomon he thought too Epicurean, in the modern sense of the word; and in his notions of St. Paul he agreed with the writer of the work entitled, *Not Paul but Jesus*. For his Christianity, in the proper sense of the word, he went to the Epistle of St. James, and to the Sermon on the Mount by Christ himself, for whose beneficent intentions he entertained the greatest reverence. There was nothing which embittered his enemies against him more than the knowledge of this fact. His want of faith, indeed, in the letter, and his exceeding faith in the spirit, of Christianity, formed a comment, the one on the other, very formidable to those who chose to forget what Scripture itself observes on that point.<sup>1</sup>

As an instance of Shelley's extraordinary generosity, a friend of his, a man of letters,<sup>2</sup> enjoyed from him at that period a pension of a hundred a year, though he had but a thousand of his own; and he continued to enjoy it till fortune rendered it superfluous. But the princeliness of his disposition was seen most in his behaviour to another friend, the writer of this memoir, who is proud to relate, that with money raised by an effort, Shelley once made him a present of fourteen hundred pounds, to extricate him from debt. I was not extricated, for I had not yet learned to be careful:

<sup>1</sup> "For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866), the novelist, to whom some of Shelley's best letters were addressed.]



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but the shame of not being so, after such generosity, and the pain which my friend afterwards underwent when I was in trouble and he was helpless, were the first causes of my thinking of money matters to any purpose. His last sixpence was ever at my service, had I chosen to share it. In a poetical epistle written some years afterwards, and published in the volume of *Posthumous Poems*,<sup>1</sup> Shelley, in alluding to his friend's circumstances, which for the second time were then straitened, only made an affectionate lamentation that he himself was poor; never once hinting that he had already drained his purse for his friend.

To return to Hampstead.—Shelley often came there to see me, sometimes to stop for several days. He delighted in the natural broken ground, and in the fresh air of the place, especially when the wind set in from the north-west, which used to give him an intoxication of animal spirits. Here also he swam his paper boats on the ponds, and delighted to play with my children, particularly with my eldest boy, the seriousness of whose imagination, and his susceptibility of a "grim" impression (a favourite epithet of Shelley's), highly interested him. He would play at "frightful creatures" with him, from which the other would snatch "a fearful joy," only begging him occasionally "not to do the horn," which was a way that Shelley had of screwing up his hair in front, to imitate a weapon of that sort. This was the boy (now the man of forty-eight, and himself a fine writer) to whom Lamb took such a liking on similar accounts, and addressed

[<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt assisted Mrs. Shelley in the publication of her husband's *Posthumous Poems* which were issued in 1824 by John Hunt. The poem alluded to is the "Letter to Maria Gisborne," in which Shelley describes Hunt as:—

"—one of those happy souls  
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom  
This world would smell like what is—a tomb;  
And there is he with his eternal puns,  
Which beat the dullest brains for smiles, like duns  
Thundering for money at a poet's door;  
Alas! it is no use to say 'I'm poor!'"

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some charming verses as his "favourite child." I have already mentioned him during my imprisonment.<sup>1</sup>

As an instance of Shelley's playfulness when he was in good spirits, he was once going to town with me in the Hampstead stage, when our only companion was an old lady, who sat silent and still after the English fashion. Shelley was fond of quoting a passage from *Richard the Second*, in the commencement of which the king, in the indulgence of his misery, exclaims—

"For Heaven's sake! let us sit upon the ground,  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings."<sup>2</sup>

Shelley, who had been moved into the ebullition by something objectionable which he thought he saw in the face of our companion, startled her into a look of the most ludicrous astonishment, by suddenly calling this passage to mind, and, in his enthusiastic tone of voice, addressing me by name with the first two lines. "Hunt!" he exclaimed,—

"For Heaven's sake! let us sit upon the ground,  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings."

The old lady looked on the coach-floor, as if expecting to see us take our seats accordingly.

But here follows a graver and more characteristic anecdote. Shelley was not only anxious for the good of mankind in general. We have seen what he proposed on the subject of Reform in Parliament, and he was always very desirous of the national welfare. It was a moot point when he entered your room, whether he would begin with some half-pleasant, half-pensive joke, or quote something Greek, or ask some question about public affairs. He once came upon me at Hampstead, when I had not seen him for some time; and after grasping my hands with both his, in his usual fervent manner, he sat down, and looked at me very earnestly, with a deep, though not melancholy, interest

[<sup>1</sup> Thornton Leigh Hunt, see note vol. 2, p. 10.]

[<sup>2</sup> "For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings."

*Richard II.* iii., 2.]

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in his face. We were sitting with our knees to the fire, to which we had been getting nearer and nearer, in the comfort of finding ourselves together. The pleasure of seeing him was my only feeling at the moment ; and the air of domesticity about us was so complete, that I thought he was going to speak of some family matter, either his or my own, when he asked me, at the close of an intensity of pause, what was "the amount of the national debt."

I used to rally him on the apparent inconsequentiality of his manner upon those occasions, and he was always ready to carry on the jest, because he said that my laughter did not hinder my being in earnest.

But here follows a crowning anecdote, with which I shall close my recollections of him at this period. We shall meet him again in Italy, and there, alas ! I shall have to relate events graver still.

I was returning home one night to Hampstead after the opera. As I approached the door, I heard strange and alarming shrieks, mixed with the voice of a man. The next day it was reported by the gossips that Mr. Shelley, no Christian (for it was he who was there), had brought some "very strange female" into the house, no better, of course, than she ought to be. The real Christian had puzzled them. Shelley, in coming to our house that night, had found a woman lying near the top of the hill, in fits. It was a fierce winter night, with snow upon the ground ; and winter loses nothing of its fierceness at Hampstead. My friend, always the promptest as well as most pitying on these occasions, knocked at the first houses he could reach, in order to have the woman taken in. The invariable answer was, that they could not do it. He asked for an outhouse to put her in, while he went for a doctor. Impossible ! In vain he assured them she was no impostor. They would not dispute the point with him ; but doors were closed, and windows were shut down. Had he lit upon worthy Mr. Park,<sup>1</sup> the philologist, that gentleman would assuredly have come, in spite of his Calvinism. But he

[<sup>1</sup> Thomas Park, F.S.A., the antiquarian, who died at Hampstead in 1834, aged 75.]

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lived too far off. Had he lit upon my friend Armitage Brown,<sup>1</sup> who lived on another side of the Heath; or on his friend and neighbour Dilke; they would either of them have jumped up from amidst their books or their bed-clothes, and have gone out with him. But the paucity of Christians is astonishing, considering the number of them. Time flies; the poor woman is in convulsions; her son, a young man, lamenting over her. At last my friend sees a carriage driving up to a house at a little distance. The knock is given; the warm door opens; servants and lights pour forth. Now, thought he, is the time. He puts on his best address, which anybody might recognize for that of the highest gentleman as well as of an interesting individual, and plants himself in the way of an elderly person, who is stepping out of the carriage with his family. He tells his story. They only press on the faster. "Will you go and see her?" "No, sir; there's no necessity for that sort of thing, depend on it. Impostors swarm everywhere: the thing cannot be done; sir, your conduct is extraordinary." "Sir," cried Shelley, assuming a very different manner, and forcing the flourishing householder to stop out of astonishment, "I am sorry to say that *your* conduct is *not* extraordinary; and if my own seems to amaze you, I will tell you something which may amaze you a little more, and I hope will frighten you. It is such men as you who madden the spirits and the patience of the poor and wretched; and if ever a convulsion comes in this country (which is very probable), recollect what I tell you:—you will have your house, that you refuse to put the miserable woman into, burnt over your head." "God bless me, sir! Dear me, sir!" exclaimed the poor, frightened man, and fluttered into his mansion. The woman was then brought to our house, which was at some distance, and down a bleak path (it was in the Vale of Health); and Shelley and her son were obliged to hold her till the

[<sup>1</sup> Charles Armitage Brown (1786–1842) the devoted friend of John Keats.—His acquaintance with Lord Houghton, then Mr. Richard Monckton Milnes, resulted in the latter becoming the biographer of the poet and the editor of his works.]



## KEATS, LAMB, AND COLERIDGE

doctor could arrive. It appeared that she had been attending this son in London, on a criminal charge made against him, the agitation of which had thrown her into the fits on her return. The doctor said that she would have perished, had she lain there ■ short time longer. The next day my friend sent mother and son comfortably home to Hendon, where they were known, and whence they returned him thanks full of gratitude.

### CHAPTER XVI

KEATS, LAMB, AND COLERIDGE

(1816-1834.)

AND now to speak of Keats, who was introduced to me by his schoolmaster's son, Charles Cowden Clarke, a man of a most genial nature and corresponding poetical taste, admirably well qualified to nourish the genius of his pupil.<sup>1</sup>

I had not known the young poet long, when Shelley and he became acquainted under my roof. Keats did not take to Shelley as kindly as Shelley did to him. Shelley's only thoughts of his new acquaintance were such as regarded his bad health, with which he sympathized, and his poetry, of which he has left such a monument of his admiration in *Adonais*. Keats, being a little too sensitive on the score of his origin, felt inclined to see in every man of birth a sort of natural enemy. Their styles in writing also were very different; and Keats, notwithstanding his unbounded sympathies with ordinary flesh and blood, and even the transcendental cosmopolitics of *Hyperion*, was so far inferior in universality to his great acquaintance, that he could not

[<sup>1</sup> Cowden Clarke relates that the first poem that Keats showed him was the sonnet entitled "Written on the day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left prison." That was before Keats knew Hunt: they probably met at Hunt's cottage at Hampstead in the spring of 1816. The meeting of Shelley and Keats took place at Hampstead a year later.]



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accompany him in his dædal rounds with nature, and his Archimedean endeavours to move the globe with his own hands. I am bound to state thus much ; because, hopeless of recovering his health, under circumstances that made the feeling extremely bitter, an irritable morbidity appears even to have driven his suspicions to excess ; and this not only with regard to the acquaintance whom he might reasonably suppose to have had some advantages over him, but to myself, who had none ; for I learned the other day, with extreme pain, such as I am sure so kind and reflecting a man as Mr. Monckton Milnes<sup>1</sup> would not have inflicted on me could he have foreseen it, that Keats at one period of his intercourse with us suspected both Shelley and myself of a wish to see him undervalued ! Such are the tricks which constant infelicity can play with the most noble natures. For Shelley, let *Adonais* answer. For myself, let every word answer which I uttered about him, living and dead, and such as I now proceed to repeat. I might as well have been told that I wished to see the flowers or the stars undervalued, or my own heart that loved him.<sup>2</sup>

But it was sickness, and passed away. It appears, by Mr. Milnes's book, that all his friends dissatisfied him in the course of those trials of his temper ; and my friend, Mr. Milnes, will allow me to say, that those Letters and Remains of the young poet were not among his happiest effusions, nor wanting to supply a certain force of character to his memory. That memory possessed force enough already for those who were qualified to discern it ; and those who were not, hardly deserved to have their own notions of energy flattered at the poet's expense. Keats was already known to

[<sup>1</sup> Richard Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton (1809-1885) published in 1848 *The Life, Letters and Literary Remains of John Keats*, 2 vols.]

[<sup>2</sup> In a letter to his brothers George and Thomas, dated Jan. 23, 1818, Keats alludes to his suspicions regarding Hunt and Shelley. "The fact is he (Hunt) and Shelley are hurt, and perhaps justly, at my not having shown them the affair (the MS. of *Endymion*) officiously ; and from several hints I have had they appear much disposed to dissect and anatomize any trip or slip I may have made."] ]

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have personally chastised a blackguard, and to have been the author of *Hyperion* :

“That large utterance of the early gods.”

What more could have been necessary to balance the trembling excess of sensibility in his earlier poems? The world has few enough incarnations of poets themselves in Arcadian shapes, to render necessary any deterioration of such as it has the luck to possess.

But perhaps my own personal feelings induce me to carry this matter too far. In the publication alluded to is a contemptuous reference (not by Mr. Milnes) to a paper in the *Examiner* on the season of Christmas. I turned to it with new feelings of anxiety; and there I found no warrant for such reference, unless a certain tone of self-complacency, so often regretted in this autobiography, can have justified it.

Keats appears to have been of opinion that I ought to have taken more notice of what the critics said against him. And perhaps I ought. My notices of them may not have been sufficient. I may have too much contented myself with panegyricizing his genius, and thinking the objections to it of no ultimate importance. Had he given me a hint to another effect, I should have acted upon it. But in truth, as I have before intimated, I did not see a twentieth part of what was said against us; nor had I the slightest notion, at that period, that he took criticism so much to heart. I was in the habit, though a public man, of living in a world of abstractions of my own; and I regarded him as of a nature still more abstracted, and sure of renown. Though I was a politician (so to speak), I had scarcely a political work in my library.<sup>1</sup> Spensers and Arabian Tales filled up the shelves; and Spenser himself was not remoter, in my eyes, from all the commonplaces of life,

[<sup>1</sup> Procter describes Hunt's study in 1817, when he lived at York Buildings as “a tiny room, built out at the back of the drawing room on the first floor, which he appropriated as a study, and over the door was a line from the *Fairy Queen*. . . . He had very few books, an edition of the Italian poets in many volumes, Spenser's works, and the minor poems of Milton being, however, amongst them. I don't think there was a Shakespeare.”]

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than my new friend. Our whole talk was made up of idealisms. In the streets we were in the thick of the old woods. I little suspected, as I did afterwards, that the hunters had struck him ; and never at any time did I suspect that he could have imagined it desired by his friends. Let me quit the subject of so afflicting a delusion.

In everything but this reserve, which was to a certain extent encouraged by my own incuriousness (for I have no reserve myself with those whom I love)—in every other respect but this, Keats and I might have been taken for friends of the old stamp, between whom there was no such thing even as obligation, except the pleasure of it. I could not love him as deeply as I did Shelley. That was impossible. But my affection was only second to the one which I entertained for that heart of hearts. Keats, like Shelley himself, enjoyed the usual privilege of greatness with all whom he knew, rendering it delightful to be obliged by him, and an equal, but not greater, delight to oblige. It was a pleasure to his friends to have him in their houses, and he did not grudge it. When *Endymion* was published,<sup>1</sup> he was living at Hampstead with his friend, Charles Armitage Brown, who attended him most affectionately through a severe illness, and with whom, to their great mutual enjoyment, he had taken a journey into Scotland. The lakes and mountains of the north delighted him exceedingly. He beheld them with an epic eye. Afterwards, he went into the south, and luxuriated in the Isle of Wight. On Brown's leaving home a second time, to visit the same quarter, Keats, who was too ill to accompany him, came to reside with me, when his last and best volume of poems appeared, containing *Lamia*, *Isabella*, the *Eve of St. Agnes*, and the noble fragment of *Hyperion*.<sup>2</sup> I remember Lamb's delight and admiration on reading this book ; how pleased he was with the designation of Mercury as "the star of

[<sup>1</sup> In 1818.]

[<sup>2</sup> The *Lamia* volume was published in July, 1820. Hunt was living at 13, Mortimer Street, Kentish Town, when Keats went to stay with him.]

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Lethe" (rising, as it were, and glittering as he came upon that pale region); and the fine daring anticipation in that passage of the second poem—

"So the two brothers and *their murdered man*  
Rode past fair Florence."

So also the description, at once delicate and gorgeous, of Agnes praying beneath the painted window. The public are now well acquainted with those and other passages, for which Persian kings would have filled a poet's mouth with gold. I remember Keats reading to me with great relish and particularity, conscious of what he had set forth, the lines describing the supper, and ending with the words,

"Lucent syrops tinct with cinnamon."

Mr. Wordsworth would have said that the vowels were not varied enough; but Keats knew where his vowels were *not* to be varied. On the occasion above alluded to, Wordsworth found fault with the repetition of the concluding sound of the participles in Shakspeare's line about bees:—

"The *singing* masons *building* roofs of gold."

This, he said, was a line which Milton would never have written. Keats thought, on the other hand, that the repetition was in harmony with the continued note of the singers, and that Shakspeare's negligence (if negligence it was) had instinctively felt the thing in the best manner. The assertion about Milton is startling, considering the tendency of that great poet to subject his nature to art; yet I have dipped, while writing this, into *Paradise Lost*, and at the second chance have lit on the following:—

"The gray  
Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danced,  
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the moon,  
But opposite, *in levelled west*, was set  
His mirrour, with full force borrowing her light."

The repetition of the *e* in the fourth line is an extreme



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case in point, being monotonous in order to express oneness and evenness.

Keats had felt that his disease was mortal, two or three years before he died. He had a constitutional tendency to consumption; a close attendance on the deathbed of a beloved brother, when he ought to have been nursing himself in bed, gave it a blow which he felt for months. Despairing love (that is to say, despairing of living to enjoy it, for the love was returned) added its hourly torment; and, meanwhile, the hostile critics came up, and roused an indignation in him, both against them and himself, which on so many accounts he could ill afford to endure.

When I was in Italy, Lord Byron showed me in manuscript the well-known passage in *Don Juan*, in which Keats' death is attributed to the *Quarterly Review*; the couplet about the "fiery particle," that was "snuffed out by an article." I told him the real state of the case, proving to him that the supposition was a mistake, and therefore, if printed, would be a misrepresentation. But a stroke of wit was not to be given up.

At length Keats was persuaded by his friends to try the milder climate of Italy. He thought it better for others as well as himself, that he should go. He was accompanied by Mr. Severn,<sup>1</sup> then a young artist of a promise equal to his subsequent repute, who possessed all that could recommend him for a companion—old acquaintanceship, great animal spirits, active tenderness, and a mind capable of appreciating that of the poet. They went first to Naples, and afterwards to Rome; where, on the 23rd of February, 1821, our author died in the arms of his friend, completely worn out, and longing for the release. He suffered so much in his lingering, that he used to watch the countenance of the physician for the favourable and

[<sup>1</sup> Joseph Severn (1793-1879). He won the Gold Medal at the Academy Students' competition of 1817, and after Keats' death was awarded a three years' travelling premium by the Academy. He subsequently became British Consul at Rome, which office he held until 1872. Severn was buried in Rome, beside Keats.]



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fatal sentence, and express his regret when he found it delayed. Yet no impatience escaped him. He was manly and gentle to the last, and grateful for all services. A little before he died, he said that he "felt the daisies growing over him." But he made a still more touching remark respecting his epitaph. "If any," he said, "were put over him, he wished it to consist of nothing but these words: 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water:—'"—so little did he think of the more than promise he had given;—of the fine and lasting things he had added to the stock of poetry. The physicians expressed their astonishment that he had held out so long, the lungs turning out, on inspection, to have been almost obliterated. They said he must have lived upon the mere strength of the spirit within him. He was interred in the English burying-ground at Rome, near the monument of Caius Cestius, where his great mourner, Shelley, was shortly to join him.

Keats, when he died, had just completed his four-and-twentieth year. He was under the middle height; and his lower limbs were small in comparison with the upper, but neat and well turned. His shoulders were very broad for his size: he had a face in which energy and sensibility were remarkably mixed up; an eager power, checked and made patient by ill-health. Every feature was at once strongly cut, and delicately alive. If there was any faulty expression, it was in the mouth, which was not without something of a character of pugnacity. His face was rather long than otherwise; the upper lip projected a little over the under; the chin was bold, the cheeks sunken; the eyes mellow and glowing; large, dark, and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears, and his mouth trembled. In this, there was ill-health as well as imagination, for he did not like these betrayals of emotion; and he had great personal as well as moral courage. He once chastised a butcher, who had been insolent, by a regular stand-up fight. His hair, of a brown colour, was fine, and hung in natural ringlets. The head was a puzzle for the phrenologists,

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being remarkably small in the skull; a singularity which he had in common with Byron and Shelley, whose hats I could not get on. Keats was sensible of the disproportion above noticed, between his upper and lower extremities; and he would look at his hand, which was faded, and swollen in the veins, and say it was the hand of a man of fifty. He was a seven months' child. His mother, who was a lively woman, passionately fond of amusement, is supposed to have hastened her death by too great an inattention to hours and seasons. Perhaps she hastened that of her son. His father died of a fall from his horse in the year 1804.

I have endeavoured, in another publication,<sup>1</sup> to characterize the poetry of Keats, both in its merits and defects. It is not necessary to repeat them here. The public have made up their minds on the subject; and such of his first opponents as were men of genius themselves, but suffered their perceptions to be obscured by political prejudice, (as who has not in such a time?) have long agreed with, or anticipated the verdict. Sir Walter Scott confessed to Mr. Severn at Rome, that the truth respecting Keats had prevailed; and it would have been strange, indeed, when the heat of the battle was over, had not Christopher North stretched out his large and warm hand to his memory. Times arrive, under the hallowing influences of thought and trouble, when genius is as sure to acknowledge genius, as it is to feel its own wants, and to be willing to share its glory. A man's eyes, the manlier they are, perceive at last, that there is nothing nobler in them than their tears.

It was during my intimacy with Keats that I published a hasty set of miscellaneous poems, under the title of *Foliage*,<sup>2</sup> and wrote the set of essays that have since become popular under that of the *Indicator*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Imagination and Fancy*, p. 312.

<sup>2</sup> *Foliage, or Poems Original and Translated*, 1818.]

<sup>3</sup> *The Indicator*, edited by Leigh Hunt, began on October 13, 1819, and continued to October 13, 1821. Hunt's connection ended with the 77th number of vol. 2. The magazine forms 2 vols., which bear the dates 1820, 1822. In a letter to Shelley, dated Sep. 20, 1819, Hunt explains the meaning of the title of this periodical. He says:

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About this time also, I translated the *Aminta* of Tasso,<sup>1</sup> a poem (be it said with the leave of so great a name) hardly worth the trouble, though the prologue is a charming presentment of love in masquerade, and the *Ode on the Golden Age*, a sigh out of the honestest part of the heart of humanity. But I translated it to enable me to meet some demands, occasioned by the falling off in the receipts of the *Examiner*, now declining under the twofold vicissitude of triumphant ascendancy in the Tories, and the desertion of reform by the Whigs. The *Indicator* assisted me still more, though it was but published in a corner, owing to my want of funds for advertising it, and my ignorance of the best mode of circulating such things—an ignorance so profound, that I was not even aware of its very sale; for I had never attended, not only to the business part of the *Examiner*, but to the simplest money matter that stared at me on the face of it. I could never tell anybody who asked me, what was the price of its stamp!

Do I boast of this ignorance? Alas! I have no such respect for the pedantry of absurdity as that. I blush for it; and I only record it out of a sheer painful movement of conscience, as a warning to those young authors who might be led to look upon such folly as a fine thing; which at all events is what I never thought it myself. I did not think about it at all, except to avoid the thought; and I only wish that the strangest accidents of education, and the most inconsiderate habit of taking books for the only ends of life, had not conspired to make me so ridiculous. I am feeling the consequences at this moment, in pangs which I cannot explain, and which I may not live long enough, perhaps, to escape.

Let me console myself a little by remembering how much Hazlitt and Lamb, and others, were pleased with the *Indicator*. I speak most of them, because they

"It is to be called the *Indicator*, after a bird of that name, who shows people where to find wild honey; and will, in fact, be nothing but a collection of very short pieces of remark, biography, ancient fictions, etc.; in short, of any subjects that come to hand, and of which I shall endeavour to extract the essence for the reader."

<sup>1</sup> *Amyntas, a Tale of the Woods, from the Italian of Tasso*. London, 1820.]

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talked most to me about it. Hazlitt's favourite paper (for they liked it enough to have favourite papers) was the one on *Sleep*; perhaps because there is a picture in it of a sleeping despot; though he repeated, with more enthusiasm than he was accustomed to do, the conclusion about the parent and the bride. Lamb preferred the paper on *Coaches and their Horses*, that on the *Deaths of Little Children*, and (I think) the one entitled *Thoughts and Guesses on Human Nature*. Shelley took to the story of the *Fair Revenge*; and the paper that was most liked by Keats, if I remember, was the one on a hot summer's day, entitled *A Now*. He was with me while I was writing and reading it to him, and contributed one or two of the passages. Keats first published in the *Indicator* his beautiful poem *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*, and the *Dream after reading Dante's Episode of Paulo and Francesca*. Lord Holland, I was told, had a regard for the portraits of the *Old Lady* and the *Old Gentleman*, etc., which had appeared in the *Examiner*; and a late gallant captain in the navy was pleased to wonder how I became so well acquainted with seamen (in the article entitled *Seamen on Shore*). They had "sat to me" for their portraits. The common sailor was a son of my nurse at school, and the officer a connection of my own by marriage.

Let me take this opportunity of recording my recollections in general of my friend Lamb; of all the world's friend, particularly of his oldest friends, Coleridge and Southey; for I think he never modified or withheld any opinion (in private or bookwards) except in consideration of what he thought they might not like.

Charles Lamb had a head worthy of Aristotle, with as fine a heart as ever beat in human bosom, and limbs very fragile to sustain it. There was a caricature of him sold in the shops, which pretended to be a likeness.<sup>1</sup> Proctor went into the shop in a passion, and

<sup>1</sup> Bryan Waller Proctor (1788-1874), better known as "Barry Cornwall." The portrait referred to was an etching by Brook Pulham, one of Lamb's colleagues at the India House. For a humorous criticism of the print, see Lamb's letter to Coleridge of June 1, 1826.]



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asked the man what he meant by putting forth such a libel. The man apologized, and said that the artist meant no offence. There never was a true portrait of Lamb. His features were strongly yet delicately cut; he had a fine eye as well as forehead; and no face carried in it greater marks of thought and feeling. It resembled that of Bacon, with less worldly vigour and more sensibility.

As his frame, so was his genius. It was as fit for thought as could be, and equally as unfit for action; and this rendered him melancholy, apprehensive, humorous, and willing to make the best of everything as it was, both from tenderness of heart and abhorrence of alteration. His understanding was too great to admit an absurdity; his frame was not strong enough to deliver it from a fear. His sensibility to strong contrasts was the foundation of his humour, which was that of a wit at once melancholy and willing to be pleased. He would beard a superstition, and shudder at the old phantasm while he did it. One could have imagined him cracking a jest in the teeth of a ghost, and then melting into thin air himself, out of sympathy with the awful. His humour and his knowledge both, were those of Hamlet, of Molière, of Carlin, who shook a city with laughter, and, in order to divert his melancholy, was recommended to go and hear himself. Yet he extracted a real pleasure out of his jokes, because good-heartedness retains that privilege when it fails in everything else. I should say he condescended to be a punster, if condescension had been a word befitting wisdom like his. Being told that somebody had lampooned him, he said, "Very well, I'll Lamb-pun him." His puns were admirable, and often contained as deep things as the wisdom of some who have greater names; such a man, for instance, as Nicole,<sup>1</sup> the Frenchman, who was a baby to him. Lamb would have cracked a score of jokes at Nicole, worth his whole book of sentences; pelted his head with pearls. Nicole would not have understood him, but Rochefoucault would, and

[<sup>1</sup> Pierre Nicole (1625-1695), a divine who wrote *Epigrammatum Delectus*.]



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Pascal too; and some of our old Englishmen would have understood him still better. He would have been worthy of hearing Shakspeare read one of his scenes to him, hot from the brain. Commonplace found a great comforter in him, as long as it was good-natured; it was to the ill-natured or the dictatorial only that he was startling. Willing to see society go on as it did, because he despaired of seeing it otherwise, but not at all agreeing in his interior with the common notions of crime and punishment, he "*dumbfounded*" a long tirade against vice one evening, by taking the pipe out of his mouth, and asking the speaker, "Whether he meant to say that a thief was not a good man?" To a person abusing Voltaire, and indiscreetly opposing his character to that of Jesus Christ, he said admirably well (though he by no means overrated Voltaire, nor wanted reverence in the other quarter), that "Voltaire was a very good Jesus Christ for the French." He liked to see the church-goers continue to go to church, and wrote a tale in his sister's admirable little book (*Mrs. Leicester's School*) to encourage the rising generation to do so; but to a conscientious deist he had nothing to object; and if an atheist had found every other door shut against him, he would assuredly not have found his. I believe he would have had the world remain precisely as it was, provided it innovated no farther; but this spirit in him was anything but a worldly one, or for his own interest. He hardly contemplated with patience the new buildings in the Regent's Park: and, privately speaking, he had a grudge against *official* heaven-expounders, or clergymen. He would rather, however, have been with a crowd that he disliked, than felt himself alone. He said to me one day, with a face of great solemnity, "What must have been that man's feelings, who thought himself *the first deist*?" Finding no footing in certainty, he delighted to confound the borders of theoretical truth and falsehood. He was fond of telling wild stories to children, engrafted on things about them; wrote letters to people abroad, telling them that a friend of theirs [Mr. Alsager, the commercial editor of the *Times*] had come out in genteel comedy; and

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persuaded George Dyer that *Lord Castlereagh* was the author of *Waverley*! The same excellent person walking one evening out of his friend's house into the New River, Lamb (who was from home at the time) wrote a paper under his signature of *Elia*, stating, that common friends would have stood dallying on the bank, have sent for neighbours, etc., but that *he*, in his magnanimity, jumped in, and rescued his friend after the old noble fashion. He wrote in the same magazine two lives of Liston and Munden, which the public took for serious, and which exhibit an extraordinary jumble of imaginary facts and truth of bye-painting. Munden he made born at "Stoke Pogis:" the very sound of which was like the actor speaking and digging his words. He knew how many false conclusions and pretensions are made by men who profess to be guided by facts only, as if facts could not be misconceived, or figments taken for them; and therefore, one day, when somebody was speaking of a person who valued himself on being a matter-of-fact man, "Now," said he, "I value myself on being a matter-of-lie man." This did not hinder his being a man of the greatest veracity, in the ordinary sense of the word; but "truth," he said, "was precious, and not to be wasted on everybody." Those who wish to have a genuine taste of him, and an insight into his modes of life, should read his essays on *Hogarth* and *King Lear*, his *Letters*, his article on the *London Streets*, on *Whist-Playing*, which he loves, and on *Saying Grace before Meat*, which he thinks a strange moment to select for being grateful. He said once to a brother whist-player, whose hand was more clever than clean, and who had enough in him to afford the joke, "M.,<sup>1</sup> if dirt were trumps, what hands you would hold." [Another anecdote of Lamb his friend would relate with great gusto. While Leigh Hunt was living at Highgate, he used sometimes to be visited by his old schoolfellow, and Coleridge, who, it will be remembered, was Lamb's contemporary at Christ's Hospital, would sometimes supervene, and join for a short space in the walk and the conversa-

[<sup>1</sup> Martin Burney.]

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tion, the talk being as usual chiefly appropriated by himself. One day the soliloquy thus poured into the ears of the two friends turned upon the blessings of faith, and it was both in tone and phraseology marked by the accepted dialect of the most "regenerated" orthodoxy: in short, what uncourteous or invidious persons might call canting. After the illustrious poet had taken his leave, Leigh Hunt exclaimed, in a tone of perplexed vexation, "What makes Coleridge talk in that way about heavenly grace, and the holy church, and that sort of thing?" "Ah," replied Lamb, with the hearty tone of a man uttering an obvious truism, but struggling with his habitual stammer, "there is a g-g-reat deal of fun in Coleridge!"—T.H.]

Lamb had seen strange faces of calamity; but they did not make him love those of his fellow-creatures the less. Few persons guessed what he had suffered in the course of his life, till his friend Talfourd wrote an account of it, and showed the hapless warping that disease had given to the fine brain of his sister.

I will append to this account of Lamb, though I had not the good fortune to know much of him personally, my impressions respecting his friend Coleridge.

Coleridge was as little fitted for action as Lamb, but on a different account. His person was of a good height, but as sluggish and solid as the other's was light and fragile. He had, perhaps, suffered it to look old before its time, for want of exercise. His hair was white at fifty; and as he generally dressed in black, and had a very tranquil demeanour, his appearance was gentlemanly, and for several years before his death was reverend. Nevertheless, there was something invincibly young in the look of his face. It was round and fresh-coloured, with agreeable features, and an open, indolent, good-natured mouth. This boy-like expression was very becoming in one who dreamed and speculated as he did when he was really a boy, and who passed his life apart from the rest of the world, with a book, and his flowers. His forehead was prodigious—a great piece of placid marble; and his fine eyes, in which all the activity of his mind seemed

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to concentrate, moved under it with a sprightly ease, as if it was pastime to them to carry all that thought.

And it was pastime. Hazlitt said that Coleridge's genius appeared to him like a spirit, all head and wings, eternally floating about in etherealities. He gave me a different impression. I fancied him a good-natured wizard, very fond of earth, and conscious of reposing with weight enough in his easy chair, but able to conjure his etherealities about him in the twinkling of an eye. He could also change them by thousands, and dismiss them as easily when his dinner came. It was a mighty intellect put upon a sensual body; and the reason why he did little more with it than talk and dream was, that it is agreeable to such a body to do little else. I do not mean that Coleridge was a sensualist in an ill sense. He was capable of too many innocent pleasures to take any pleasure in the way that a man of the world would take it. The idlest things he did would have had a warrant. But if all the senses, in their time, did not find lodging in that humane plenitude of his, never believe that they did in Thomson or in Boccaccio. Two affirmatives in him made a negative. He was very metaphysical and very corporeal; so in mooting everything, he said (so to speak) nothing. His brains pleaded all sorts of questions before him, and he heard them with too much impartiality (his spleen not giving him any trouble), that he thought he might as well sit in his easy chair and hear them for ever, without coming to a conclusion. It has been said (indeed, he said himself) that he took opium to deaden the sharpness of his cogitations. I will venture to affirm, that if he ever took anything to deaden a sensation within him, it was for no greater or more marvellous reason than other people take it; which is, because they do not take enough exercise, and so plague their heads with their livers. Opium, perhaps, might have settled an uneasiness of this sort in Coleridge, as it did in a much less man with a much greater body—the Shadwell<sup>1</sup> of

[<sup>1</sup> Thomas Shadwell (?1642 1692), the poet laureate who superseded Dryden much to the latter's resentment.]



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Dryden. He would then resume his natural ease, and sit, and be happy, till the want of exercise must be again supplied. The vanity of criticism, like all other vanities, except that of dress (which, so far, has an involuntary philosophy in it), is always forgetting that we are half made up of body. Hazlitt was angry with Coleridge for not being ~~as~~ zealous in behalf of progress as he used to be when young. I was sorry for it, too; and if other men as well as Hazlitt had not kept me in heart, should have feared that the world was destined to be for ever lost, for want either of perseverance or calmness. But Coleridge had less right to begin his zeal in favour of liberty than he had to leave it off. He should have bethought himself, first, whether he had the courage not to get fat.

As to the charge against him, of eternally probing the depths of his own mind, and trying what he could make of them beyond the ordinary pale of logic and philosophy, surely there was no harm in a man taking this new sort of experiment upon him, whatever little chance there may have been of his doing anything with it. Coleridge, after all, was but one man, though an extraordinary man: his faculties inclined him to the task, and were suitable to it; and it is impossible to say what new worlds may be laid open, some day or other, by this apparently hopeless process. The fault of Coleridge, like that of all thinkers indisposed to action, was, that he was too content with things as they were,—at least, too fond of thinking that old corruptions were full of good things, if the world did but understand them. Now, here was the dilemma; for it required an understanding like his own to refine upon and turn them to good as he might do; and what the world requires is not metaphysical refinement, but a hearty use of good sense. Coleridge, indeed, could refine his meaning so as to accommodate it with great good-nature to every one that came across him; and, doubtless, he found more agreement of intention among people of different opinions, than they themselves were aware of; which it was good to let them see. But when not enchained by his harmony, they

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fell asunder again, or went and committed the greatest absurdities for want of the subtle connecting tie; as was seen in the books of Mr. Irving, who, eloquent in one page, and reasoning in a manner that a child ought to be ashamed of in the next, thought to avail himself, in times like these, of the old menacing tones of damnation, without being considered a quack or an idiot, purely because Coleridge had shown him, last Friday, that damnation was not what its preachers took it for. With the same subtlety and good-nature of interpretation, Coleridge would persuade a deist that he was a Christian, and an atheist that he believed in God: all which would be very good, if the world could get on by it, and not remain stationary; but, meanwhile, millions are wretched with having too little to eat, and thousands with having too much; and these subtleties are like people talking in their sleep, when they should be up and helping.

However, if the world is to remain always as it is, give me to all eternity new talk of Coleridge, and new essays of Charles Lamb. They will reconcile it beyond all others: and that is much.

Coleridge was fat, and began to lament, in very delightful verses, that he was getting infirm. There was no old age in his verses. I heard him one day, under the Grove at Highgate, repeat one of his melodious lamentations, as he walked up and down, his voice undulating in a stream of music, and his regrets of youth sparkling with visions ever young. At the same time, he did me the honour to show me that he did not think so ill of all modern liberalism as some might suppose, denouncing the pretensions of the money-getting in a style which I should hardly venture upon, and never could equal; and asking with a triumphant eloquence what chastity itself were worth, if it were a casket, not to keep love in, but hate, and strife, and worldliness? On the same occasion, he built up a metaphor out of a flower, in a style surpassing the famous passage in Milton; deducing it from its root in religious mystery, and carrying it up into the bright, consummate flower, "the bridal chamber of repro-

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ductiveness." Of all "the Muse's mysteries," he was as great a high-priest as Spenser; and Spenser himself might have gone to Highgate to hear him talk, and thank him for his *Ancient Mariner*. His voice did not always sound very sincere; but perhaps the humble and deprecating tone of it, on those occasions, was out of consideration for the infirmities of his hearers, rather than produced by his own. He recited his *Kubla Khan* one morning to Lord Byron, in his lordship's house in Piccadilly, when I happened to be in another room. I remember the other's coming away from him, highly struck with his poem, and saying how wonderfully he talked. This was the impression of everybody who heard him.

It is no secret that Coleridge lived in the Grove at Highgate with a friendly family, who had sense and kindness enough to know that they did themselves honour by looking after the comfort of such a man. His room looked upon a delicious prospect of wood and meadow, with coloured gardens under the window, like an embroidery to the mantle. I thought, when I first saw it, that he had taken up his dwelling-place like an abbot. Here he cultivated his flowers, and had a set of birds for his pensioners, who came to breakfast with him. He might have been seen taking his daily stroll up and down, with his black coat and white locks, and a book in his hand; and was a great acquaintance of the little children. His main occupation, I believe, was reading. He loved to read old folios, and to make old voyages with Purchas and Marco Polo; the seas being in good visionary condition, and the vessel well stocked with botargoes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a more critical summary of my opinions respecting Coleridge's poetry (which I take upon the whole to have been the finest of its time; that is to say, the most quintessential, the most purely emanating from imaginative feeling, unadulterated by "thoughts" and manner), the reader may, if he pleases, consult *Imagination and Fancy*, p. 276.

# VOYAGE TO ITALY

## CHAPTER XVII

### VOYAGE TO ITALY

[Nov. 15, 1821—JUNE 28, 1822.]

**I**T was not at Hampstead that I first saw Keats. It was in York Buildings, in the New Road (No. 8), where I wrote part of the *Indicator*—and he resided with me while in Mortimer Terrace, Kentish Town (No. 13), where I concluded it. I mention this for the curious in such things; among whom I am one.<sup>1</sup>

I proceed to hasten over the declining fortunes of the *Examiner*. Politics different from ours were triumphing all over Europe; public sympathy (not the most honourable circumstance of its character) is apt to be too much qualified by fortune. Shelley, who had been for some time in Italy, had often invited me abroad; and I had as repeatedly declined going, for the reason stated in my account of him. That reason was done away by a proposal from Lord Byron to go and set up a liberal periodical publication in conjunction with them both. I was ill; it was thought by many I could not live; my wife was very ill too; my family was numerous; and it was agreed by my brother John, that while a struggle was made in England to reanimate the *Examiner*, a simultaneous endeavour should be made in Italy to secure new aid to our prospects, and new friends to the cause of liberty. My family, therefore, packed up such goods and chattels as they had a regard for, my books in particular, and we took, with strange new thoughts and feelings, but in high expectation, our journey by sea.

It was not very discreet to go many hundred miles by sea in winter-time with a large family; but a voyage was thought cheaper than a journey by land. Even

[<sup>1</sup> Mr. Colvin in his *Life of Keats* suggests that Hunt met Keats in the spring of 1816.]



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that, however, was a mistake. It was by Shelley's advice that I acted; and, I believe, if he had recommended a balloon, I should have been inclined to try it. "Put your music and your books on board a vessel" (it was thus that he wrote to us), "and you will have no more trouble." The sea was to him a pastime; he fancied us bounding over the waters, the merrier for being tossed; and thought that our will would carry us through anything, as it ought to do, seeing that we brought with us nothing but good things,—books, music, and sociality. It is true, he looked to our coming in autumn, and not in winter; and so we should have done, but for the delays of the captain. We engaged to embark in September, and did not set off till November the 16th.

I have often thought that a sea-voyage, which is generally the dullerest thing in the world, both in the experiment and the description, might be turned to different account on paper, if the narrators, instead of imitating the dulness of their predecessors, and recording that it was four o'clock P.M. when they passed Cape St. Vincent, and that on such-and-such-a-day they beheld a porpoise or a Dutchman, would look into the interior of the floating-house they inhabited, and tell us about the seamen and their modes of living; what adventures they have had,—their characters and opinions,—how they eat, drink, and sleep, etc.; what they do in fine weather, and how they endure the sharpness, the squalidness, and inconceivable misery of bad. With a large family around me to occupy my mind, I did not think of this till too late: but I am sure that this mode of treating the subject would be interesting; and what I remember to such purpose, I will set down.

Our vessel<sup>1</sup> was a small brig of a hundred and twenty tons burden, a good tight sea-boat, nothing more. Its cargo consisted of sugar; but it took in also a surreptitious stock of gunpowder, to the amount of fifty barrels, which was destined for Greece. Of this intention we knew nothing, till the barrels were sent

[<sup>1</sup> The *Jane*.]

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on board from a place up the river; otherwise, so touchy a companion would have been objected to, my wife, who was in a shattered state of health, never ceasing to entertain apprehensions on account of it, except when the storms that came upon us presented a more obvious peril. There were nine men to the crew including the mate. We numbered almost as many souls, though with smaller bodies, in the cabin, which we had entirely to ourselves; as well we might, for it was small enough.

On the afternoon of the 15th of November (1821), we took leave of some friends, who accompanied us on board; and next morning were awakened by the motion of the vessel, making its way through the shipping in the river. The new life in which we thus, as it were, found ourselves enclosed, the clanking of iron, and the cheerly cries of the seamen, together with the natural vivacity of the time of day, presented something animating to our feelings; but while we thus moved off, not without encouragement, we felt that the friend whom we were going to see was at a great distance, while others were very near, whose hands it would be a long while before we should touch again, perhaps never. We hastened to get up and busy ourselves; and great as well as small found a novel diversion in the spectacle that presented itself from the deck, our vessel threading its way through the others with gliding bulk.

The next day it blew strong from the south-east, and even in the river (the navigation of which is not easy) we had a foretaste of the alarms and bad weather that awaited us at sea. The pilot, whom we had taken in over-night (and who was a jovial fellow with a whistle like a blackbird, which, in spite of the dislike that sailors have to whistling, he was always indulging), thought it prudent to remain at anchor till two in the afternoon; and at six, a vessel meeting us carried away the jib-boom, and broke in one of the bulwarks. My wife, who had had a respite from the most alarming part of her illness, and whom it was supposed that a sea-voyage,

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even in winter, might benefit, again expectorated blood with the fright; and I began to regret that I had brought my family into this trouble.—Even in the river we had a foretaste of the sea; and the curse of being at sea to a landsman is, that you know nothing of what is going forward, and can take no active part in getting rid of your fears. You cannot “lend a hand.” The business of these small vessels is not carried on with the orderliness and tranquillity of greater ones, or of men-of-war. The crew are not very wise; the captain does not know how to make them so; the storm roars; the vessel pitches and reels; the captain, over your head, stamps and swears, and announces all sorts of catastrophes. Think of a family hearing all this, and parents in alarm for their children!

On Monday, the 19th, we passed the Nore, and proceeded down Channel amidst rain and squalls. We were now out at sea; and a rough taste we had of it. I had been three times in the Channel before, once in hard weather; but I was then a bachelor, and had only myself to think of. Let the reader picture to his imagination the little back-parlour of one of the shops in Fleet Street or the Strand, attached or let into a great moving vehicle, and tumbling about the waves from side to side, now sending all the things that are loose this way, and now that. This will give him an idea of a cabin at sea, such as we occupied. It had a table fastened down in the middle; places let into the walls on each side, one over the other, to hold beds; a short, wide, sloping window, carried off over the bulk, and looking out to sea, closed in bad weather, and a skylight, also closed in the worst storms; a bench, or locker, running under the bulk from one side of the cabin to the other; and a little fireplace opposite, in which it was impossible to keep a fire on account of the wind. The weather, at the same time, was bitterly cold, as well as wet. On one side of the fireplace was the door, and on the other a door leading into a petty closet dignified with the title of the state-room. In this room we put our servant, the captain sleeping in

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another closet outside. The berths were occupied by the children, and my wife and myself lay, as long as we could manage to do so, on the floor. Such was the trim, with boisterous wet weather, cold days, and long evenings, on which we set out on our sea-adventure.

At six o'clock in the evening of the 19th, we came to in the Downs, on a line with Sandown Castle. The wind during the night increasing to a gale, the vessel pitched and laboured considerably; and the whole of the next day it blew a strong gale, with hard squalls from the westward. The day after, the weather continuing bad, the captain thought proper to run for Ramsgate, and took a pilot for that purpose.

We stopped for a change of weather nearly three weeks at Ramsgate, where we had visits from more than one London friend, to whom I only wish we could give a tenth part of the consolation when they are in trouble, which they afforded to us. At Ramsgate I picked up Condorcet's *View of the Progress of Society*, which I read with a transport of gratitude to the author, though it had not entered so deeply into the matter as I supposed. But the very power to persevere in hopes for mankind, at a time of life when individuals are in the habit of reconciling their selfishness and fatigue by choosing to think ill of them, is a great good to any man, and achieves a great good if it act only upon one other person. Such instances of perservance beget more; and it is these that alter the world.

For some days we remained on board, and it was hoped that we should be able to set sail again. Ramsgate harbour is very shallow; and though we lay in the deepest part of it, the vessel took to a new and ludicrous species of dance, grinding and thumping upon the chalky ground. The consequence was, that the metal pintles of the rudder were all broken, and new ones obliged to be made; which the sailors told us was very lucky, as the rudder was thus proved not to be in a good condition, and it might have deserted us at sea.

We lay next a French vessel, smaller than our own, the crew of which became amusing subjects of remark. They were always whistling, singing, and



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joking. The men shaved themselves elaborately, cultivating heroic whiskers; and they strutted up and down, when at leisure, with their arms folded, and the air of naval officers. A woman or two, with kerchiefs and little curls, completed the picture. They all seemed very merry and good-humoured.

At length, tired of waiting on board, we took a quiet lodging at the other end of the town, and were pleased to find ourselves sitting still, and secure of a good rest at night. It is something, after being at sea, to find oneself not running the fork in one's eye at dinner, or suddenly sliding down the floor to the other end of the room. My wife was in a very weak state; but the rest she took was deep and tranquil, and I resumed my walks.

Few of the principal bathing-places have anything worth looking at in the neighbourhood, and Ramsgate has less than most. Pegwell Bay is eminent for shrimps. Close by was Sir William Garrow, and a little farther on was Sir William Curtis. The sea is a grand sight, but it becomes tiresome and melancholy—a great monotonous idea; at least one thinks so, when not happy. I was destined to see it grander, and dislike it more. With great injustice; for all the works of nature are beautiful, and their beauty is not to be subjected to our petty vicissitudes.

On Tuesday, the 11th of December, we set forth again, in company with nearly a hundred vessels, the white sails of which, as they shifted and presented themselves in different quarters, made an agreeable spectacle, exhibiting a kind of noble minuet. My wife was obliged to be carried down to the pier in a sedan; and the taking leave, a second time, of a dear friend, rendered our new departure a melancholy one. I would have stopped and waited for summer-time, had not circumstances rendered it advisable for us to persevere; and my wife herself fully agreed with me, and even hoped for benefit, as well as a change of weather.

Unfortunately, the promise to that effect lasted us but a day. The winds recommenced the day follow-

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ing, and there ensued such a continuity and vehemence of bad weather as rendered the winter of 1821 memorable in the shipping annals. It strewed the whole of the north-western coast of Europe with wrecks. Some readers may remember that winter. It was the one in which Mount Hecla burst out into flame, and Dungeness Lighthouse was struck with lightning. The mole at Genoa was dilapidated. Next year there were between fourteen and fifteen hundred sail less upon Lloyd's books; which, valued at an average at £1,500, made a loss of two millions of money—the least of all the losses, considering the feelings of survivors. Fifteen hundred sail (colliers) were wrecked on the single coast of Jutland. Of this turmoil we were destined to have a sufficient experience.

Two days after we left Ramsgate, the wind blowing violently from the south-west, we were under close-reefed topsails; but on its veering to westward, the captain was induced to persevere, in hopes that by coming round to the north-west, it would enable him to clear the Channel. The ship laboured very much, the sea breaking over her; and the pump was constantly going.

The next day, the 14th, we shipped a great deal of water, the pump going as before. The fore-topsail and foresail were taken in; the storm-staysail set; and the captain said we were "in the hands of God." We now wore ship to southward.

On the 15th, the weather was a little moderated, with fresh gales and cloudy. The captain told us to-day how his hair turned white in a shipwreck; and the mate entertained us with an account of the extraordinary escape of himself and some others from an American pirate, who seized their vessel, plundered and made it a wreck, and confined them under the hatches, in the hope of their going down with it. They escaped in a rag of a boat, and were taken up by a Greek vessel, which treated them with the greatest humanity. The pirate was afterwards taken and hanged at Malta, with five of his men. This story, being tragical without being tempestuous, and termi-

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nating happily for our friend, was very welcome, and occupied us agreeably. I tried to elicit some ghost stories of vessels, but could hear of nothing but the *Flying Dutchman*; nor did I succeed better on another occasion. This dearth of supernatural adventure is remarkable, considering the superstition of sailors. But their wits are none of the liveliest; the sea blunts while it mystifies; and the sailor's imagination, driven in, like his body, to the vessel he inhabits, admits only the petty wonders that come directly about him in the shape of storm-announcing fishes and birds. His superstition is that of a blunted and not of an awakened ignorance. Sailors had rather sleep than see visions.

On the 16th, the storm was alive again, with strong gales and heavy squalls. We set the fore storm-stay-sail anew, and at night the jolly-boat was torn from the stern.

The afternoon of the 17th brought us the gale that lasted fifty-six hours, "one of the most tremendous," the captain said, "that he had ever witnessed." All the sails were taken in, except the close-reefed topsail and one of the trysails. At night, the wind being at south-west, and Scilly about fifty miles north by east, the trysail sheet was carried away, and the boom and sail had a narrow escape. We were now continually wearing ship. The boom was unshipped, as it was; and it was a melancholy sight to see it lying next morning, with the sail about it, like a wounded servant who had been fighting. The morning was occupied in getting it to rights. At night we had hard squalls with lightning.

We lay-to under main-topsail until the next morning, the 19th, when at ten o'clock we were enabled to set the reefed foresail, and the captain prepared to run for Falmouth; but finding he could not get in till night, we hauled to the wind, and at three in the afternoon, wore ship to south-westward. It was then blowing heavily; and the sea, breaking over the vessel, constantly took with it a part of the bulwark. I believe we had long ceased to have a duck alive. Our poor

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goat had contrived to find itself a corner in the long-boat, and lay frightened and shivering under a piece of canvas. I afterwards took it down in the cabin to share our lodging; but not having a berth to give it, it passed a sorry time, tied up and slipping about the floor. At night we had lightning again, with hard gales, the wind being west and north-west, and threatening to drive us on the French coast. It was a grand thing, through the black and turbid atmosphere, to see the great fiery eye of the lighthouse at the Lizard Point: it looked like a good genius with a ferocious aspect. Ancient mythology would have made dragons of these noble structures,—dragons with giant glare, warning the seaman off the coast.

The captain could not get into Falmouth: so he wore ship, and stood to the westward with fresh hopes, the wind having veered a little to the north; but, after having run above fifty miles to the south and west, the wind veered again in our teeth, and at two o'clock on the 20th, we were reduced to a close-reefed maintopsail, which, being new, fortunately held, the wind blowing so hard that it could not be taken in without the greatest risk of losing it. The sea was very heavy, and the rage of the gale tremendous, accompanied with lightning. The children on these occasions slept, unconscious of their danger. My wife slept, too, from exhaustion. I remember, as I lay awake that night, looking about to see what help I could get from imagination, to furnish a moment's respite from the anxieties that beset me, I cast my eyes on the poor goat; and recollecting how she devoured some choice biscuit I gave her one day, I got up, and going to the cupboard took out as much as I could find, and occupied myself in seeing her eat. She munched the fine white biscuit out of my hand, with equal appetite and comfort; and I thought of a saying of Sir Philip Sidney's, that we are never perfectly miserable when we can do a good-natured action.

"A large vessel is coming right down upon us;—lights—lights!" This was the cry at eleven o'clock at night, on the 21st December, the gale being tremen-



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dous, and the sea to match. Lanthorns were handed up from the cabin, and, one after the other put out. The captain thought it was owing to the weather; but it was the drunken steward, who jolted them out as he took them up the ladder. We furnished more, and contrived to see them kept in; and the captain afterwards told me that we had saved his vessel. The ship, discerning us just in time, passed ahead, looking very huge and terrible. Next morning, we saw her about two miles on our lee-bow, lying-to under trysails. It was an Indiaman. There was another vessel, a smaller, near us in the night. I thought the Indiaman looked very comfortable, with its spacious and powerful body; but the captain said we were better off a great deal in our own sea-boat; which turned out to be too true, if this was the same Indiaman, as some thought it, which was lost the night following off the coast of Devonshire. The crew said, that in one of the pauses of the wind they heard a vessel go down. We were at that time near land. While drinking tea, the keel of our ship grated against something, perhaps a shoal. The captain afterwards very properly made light of it; but at the time, being in the act of raising a cup to his mouth, I remember he turned very grave, and, getting up, went upon deck.

Next day, the 22nd, we ran for Dartmouth, and succeeding this time, found ourselves, at twelve o'clock at noon, in the middle of Dartmouth harbour,—

*“Magno telluris amore  
Egressi, optata potiuntur Troës arena.”*

We left Dartmouth, where no ships were in the habit of sailing for Italy, and went to Plymouth; intending to set off again with the beginning of spring, in a vessel bound for Genoa. But the mate of it, who, I believe, grudged us the room we should deprive him of, contrived to tell my wife a number of dismal stories, both of the ship and its captain, who was an unlucky fellow that seemed marked by fortune. Misery had also made him a Calvinist,—the most miserable of all ways of getting comfort; and this was no additional recommen-

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dation. To say the truth, having a pique against my fears on the former occasion, I was more bent on allowing myself to have none on the present ; otherwise, I should not have thought of putting forth again till the fine weather was complete. But the reasons that prevailed before, had now become still more imperative ; my wife being confined to her bed, and undergoing repeated bleedings ; so, till summer we waited.

The sea upon the whole had done me good, and I found myself able to write again, though by driblets. We lived very quietly at Stonehouse, opposite Mount-Edgecumbe, nursing our hopes for a new voyage, and expecting one of a very different complexion, in sailing towards an Italian summer. My wife kept her bed almost the whole time, and lost a great deal of blood ; but the repose, together with the sea-air, was of service to her, and enabled her to receive benefit on resuming our journey.

Thus quietly we lived, and thus should have continued, agreeably to both of our inclinations ; but some friends of the *Examiner* heard of our being in the neighbourhood, and the privatest of all public men (if I may be ranked among the number) found himself complimented by his readers, face to face, and presented with a silver cup.<sup>1</sup> I then had a taste of the Plymouth hospitality, and found it friendly and cordial to the last degree, as if the seamen's atmosphere gave a new spirit to the love of books and liberty. Nor, as the poet would say, was music wanting ; nor fair faces, the crown of welcome. Besides the landscapes in the neighbourhood, I had the pleasure of seeing some beautiful ones in the painting-room of Mr. Rogers, a very clever artist and intelligent man, who has travelled, and can think for himself. But my great *Examiner* friend, who afterwards became a personal one, was Mr. Hine, subsequently master of an academy near the metropolis, and the most attentive and energetic person of his profession that I ever met with. My principal visitors, indeed, at Plymouth consisted of schoolmasters ; —one of those signs of the times which has not been

[<sup>1</sup> Now in the possession of Mr. Walter Leigh Hunt, his grandson.]

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so ill regarded since the accession of a lettered and liberal minister to the government of this country, as they were under the supercilious ignorance, and (to say the truth) well-founded alarm of some of his predecessors.

The Devonshire people, as far as I had experience of them, were pleasant and good-humoured. Queen Elizabeth said of their gentry, that they were "all born courtiers with a becoming confidence." I know not how that may be, though she had a good specimen in Sir Walter Raleigh. But the private history of modern times might exhibit instances of natives of Devonshire winning their way into regard and power by the force of a well-constituted mixture of sweet and strong; and it is curious that the milder climate of that part of England should have produced more painters, perhaps, of a superior kind, than any other two counties can show. Drake, Jewel, Hooker, and old Fortescue, were also Devonshire-men; William Browne, the most genuine of Spenser's disciples; and Gay, the enjoying and the good-hearted, the natural man in the midst of the sophisticate.

We left Plymouth on the 13th of May, 1822, accompanied by some of our new friends who would see us on board; and set sail in a fresh vessel,<sup>1</sup> on our new summer voyage, a very different one from the last. Short acquaintances sometimes cram as much into their intercourse, as to take the footing of long ones; and our parting was not without pain. Another shadow was cast on the female countenances by the observation of our boatman, who, though an old sailor who ought to have known better, bade us remark how heavily laden our ship was, and how deep she lay in the water: so little can ignorance afford to miss an opportunity of being important.

Our new captain, and, I believe, all his crew, were Welsh, with the exception of one sailor, an unfortunate Scotchman, who seemed pitched among them to have his nationality put to the torture. Jokes were unceasingly cracked on the length of his person, the

[<sup>1</sup> In the *David Walker*.]

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oddity of his dialect, and the uncouth manner in which he stood at the helm. It was a new thing to hear Welshmen cutting up the barbarism of the "Modern Athens;" but they had the advantage of the poor fellow in wit, and he took it with a sort of sulky patience, that showed he was not destitute of one part of the wisdom of his countrymen. To have made a noise would have been to bring down new shouts of laughter; so he pocketed the affronts as well as he might, and I could not help fancying that his earnings lay in the same place more securely than those of the others about him. The captain was choleric and *brusque*, a temperament which was none the better for an inclination to plethora; but his enthusiasm in behalf of his brother tars, and the battles they had fought, was as robust as his frame; and he surprised us with writing verses on the strength of it. Very good *heart* and *impart* verses they were, too, and would cut as good a figure as any in the old magazines. While he read them, he rolled the r's in the most rugged style, and looked as if he could have run them down the throats of the enemy. The objects of his eulogy he called "our gallant *herroes*."

We took leave of Plymouth with a fine wind at north-east; and next day, on the confines of the Channel, spoke the *Two Sisters* of Guernsey, from Rio Janeiro. On a long voyage ships lose their longitude; and our information enabled the vessel to enter the Channel with security. Ships approaching and parting from one another present a fine spectacle, shifting in the light, and almost looking conscious of the grace of their movements.

We were now on the high Atlantic, with fresh health and hopes, and the prospect of an easy voyage before us. Next night, the 15th, we saw, for the first time, two grampuses, who interested us extremely with their unwieldy gambols. They were very large—in fact, a small kind of whale; but they played about the vessel like kittens, dashing round, and even under it, as if in scorn of its progress. The swiftness of fish is inconceivable. The smallest of them must be enormously



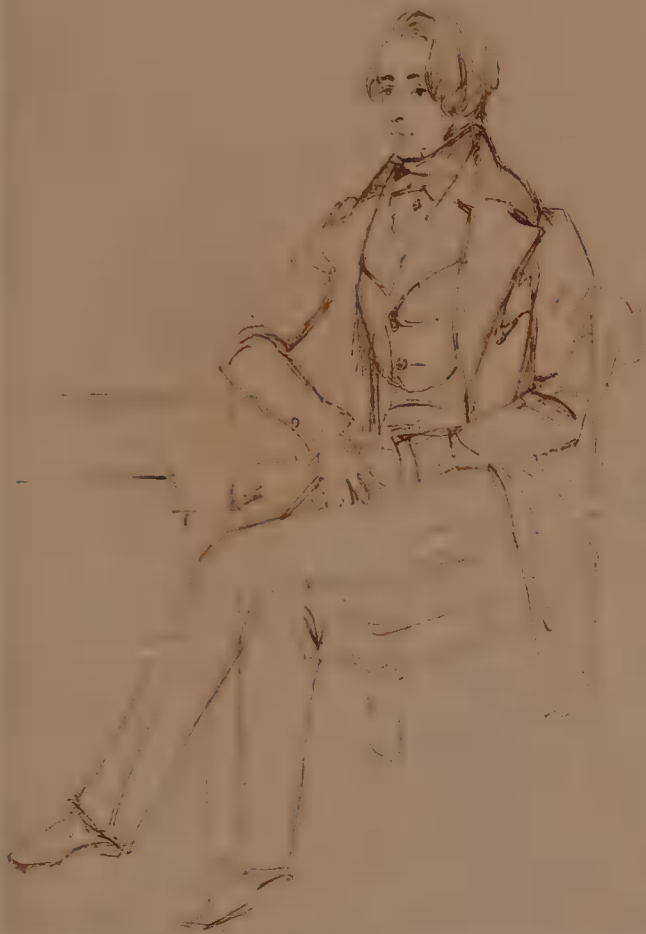
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strong: the largest are as gay as the least. One of these grampuses fairly sprang out of the water, bolt upright.

The same day, we were becalmed in the Bay of Biscay—a pleasant surprise. A calm in the Bay of Biscay, after what we had read and heard of it, sounded to us like repose in a boiling cauldron. But a calm, after all, is not repose: it is a very unresting and unpleasant thing, the ship taking a great gawky motion from side to side, as if playing the buffoon; and the sea heaving in huge oily-looking fields, like a carpet lifted. Sometimes it appears to be striped into great ribbons; but the sense of it is always more or less unpleasant, and to impatient seamen is torture.

The next day we were still becalmed. A small shark played all day long about the vessel, but was shy of the bait. The sea was swelling, and foul with putrid substances, which made us think what it would be if a calm continued a month. Coleridge has touched upon that matter, with the hand of a master, in his *Ancient Mariner*. (Here are three words in one sentence beginning with *m* and ending with *r*, to the great regret of fingers that cannot always stop to make corrections. But the compliment to Coleridge shall be the greater, since it is at my own expense.) During a calm, the seamen, that they may not be idle, are employed in painting the vessel—an operation that does not look well, amidst the surrounding aspect of sickness and faintness. The favourite colours are black and yellow; I believe, because they are the least expensive. The combination is certainly the most ugly. There are shades of darkness and yellowness that look well together in certain materials and under certain circumstances, as in the case of dark-haired beauties attired in garments of daffodil or jonquil; but in great broad stripes upon ships, the effect is nothing but a coarse combination of the glaring and the sombre.

On the 17th, we had a fine breeze at north-east. There is great enjoyment in a beautiful day at sea. You quit all the discomforts of your situation for the comforts; interchange congratulations with the seamen, who are all in good humour; seat yourself at ease



*Leigh Hunt.*  
*From a pencil sketch by Daniel Mackenzie, R.S.A.*



## VOYAGE TO ITALY

on the deck, enjoy the motion, the getting on, the healthiness of the air ; watch idly for new sights ; read a little, or chat, or give way to a day-dream ; then look up again, and expatiate on the basking scene around you, with its ripples of blue and green, or of green and gold—what the old poet beautifully calls the *innumerable smile* of the waters.

“ Πόντιών τε κύματων

Ἀνθρίθμον γέλασμα.”

PROMETHEUS VINCTUS.

The appearance of another vessel sets conjecture alive : it is “a Dane,” “a Frenchman,” “a Portuguese ;” and these words have a new effect upon us, as though we suddenly became intimate with the country to which they belong. A more striking effect of the same sort is produced by the sight of a piece of land ; it is Flamborough Head, Ushant, Cape Ortegal :—you see a part of another country, one perhaps on which you have never set foot ; and even this is a great thing : it gives you an advantage ; others have *read* of Spain or Portugal ; you have *seen* it, and are a grown man and a traveller, compared with those little children of books. These novelties affect the dullest ; but to persons of any imagination, and such as are ready for any pleasure or consolation that nature offers them, they are like pieces of a new morning of life. The world seems begun again, and our stock of knowledge recommencing on a new plan.

Then at night-time, there are those beautiful fires on the water. In a fine blue sea, the foam caused by the ship at night seems full of stars. The white fermentation, with golden sparkles in it, is beautiful beyond conception. You look over the side of the vessel, and devour it with your eyes, as you would so much ethereal syllabub. Finally, the stars in the firmament issue forth, and the moon ; always the more lovely the farther you get south. Or when there is no moon on the sea, the shadows at a little distance become grander and more solemn, and you watch for some huge fish to lift himself in the middle of them—a darker mass, breathing and spouting water.



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On the 21st, after another two days of calm, and one of rain, we passed Cape Finisterre. There was a heavy swell and rolling. Being now on the Atlantic, with not even any other name for the part of it that we sailed over to interrupt the widest association of ideas, I thought of America, and Columbus, and the chivalrous squadrons that set out from Lisbon, and the old Atlantis of Plato, formerly supposed to exist off the coast of Portugal. It is curious that the Portuguese have a tradition to this day that there is an island occasionally seen off the coast of Lisbon. The story of the Atlantis looks like some old immemorial tradition of a country that has really existed; nor is it difficult to suppose that there was formerly some great tract of land, or even continent, occupying these now watery regions, when we consider the fluctuation of things, and those changes of dry to moist, and of lofty to low, which are always taking place all over the globe. Off the coast of Cornwall, the mariner, it has been said, now rides over the old country of Lyones, or whatever else it was called, if that name be fabulous; and there are stories of doors and casements, and other evidences of occupation, brought up from the bottom. These, indeed, have lately been denied, or reduced to nothing: but old probabilities remain. In the eastern seas the gigantic work of creation is visibly going on by means of those little creatures, the coral worms; and new lands will as assuredly be inhabited there after a lapse of centuries, as old ones have vanished in the west.

“So, in them all, raignes mutabilitie.”

22nd. Fine breeze to-day from the N.E. A great shark went by. One longs to give the fellow a great dig in the mouth. Yet he is only going “on his vocation.” Without him, as without the vultures on land, something would be amiss. It is only moral pain and inequality which it is desirable to alter—that which the mind of man has an invincible tendency to alter.

To-day the seas reminded me of the “marmora pelagi” of Catullus (the “marbles of the ocean”). They looked, at a little distance, like blue water petri-

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fied. You might have supposed, that by some sudden catastrophe the mighty main had been turned into stone; and the huge animals, whose remains we find in it, fixed there for ever.

A shoal of porpoises broke up the fancy. Waves might be classed, as clouds have been; and more determination given to pictures of them. We ought to have waves and wavelets, billows, fluctuosities, etc., a marble sea, a sea weltering. The sea varies its look at the immediate side of the vessel, according as the progress is swift or slow. Sometimes it is a crisp and rapid flight, hissing; sometimes an interweaving of the foam in snake-like characters; sometimes a heavy weltering, shouldering the ship on this side and that. In what is called "the trough of the sea," which is a common state to be in during violent weather, the vessel literally appears stuck and labouring in a trough, the sea looking on either side like a hill of yeast. This was the gentlest sight we used to have in the Channel; very different from our summer amenities. I never saw what are called waves "mountains high." It is a figure of speech; and a very violent one.

23rd. A strong breeze from the N. and N.E., with clouds and rain. The foam by the vessel's side was full of those sparkles I have mentioned, like stars in clouds of froth. On the 24th the breeze increased, but the sky was fairer, and the moon gave a light. We drank the health of a friend in England, whose birthday it was; being great observers of that part of religion. The 25th brought us beautiful weather, with a wind right from the north, so that we ran down the remainder of the coast of Portugal in high style. Just as we desired it, too, it changed to N.W., so as to enable us to turn the Strait of Gibraltar merrily. Cape St. Vincent (where the battle took place), just before you come to Gibraltar, is a beautiful lone promontory jutting out upon the sea, and crowned with a convent. It presented itself to my eyes the first thing when I came upon deck in the morning, clear, solitary, blind-looking; feeling, as it were, the sea air and the solitude for ever, like something between stone and

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spirit. It reminded me of a couplet, written not long before, of

“Ghastly castle, that eternally  
Holds its blind visage out to the lone sea.”

Such things are beheld in one's day-dreams, and we are almost startled to find them real.

Gibraltar has a noble look, tall, hard, and independent. But you do not wish to live there : it is a fortress, and an insulated rock ; and such a place is but a prison. The inhabitants feed luxuriously with the help of their fruits and smugglers.

The first sight of Africa is an achievement. Voyagers in our situation are obliged to be content with a mere sight of it ; but that is much. They have seen another quarter of the globe. “Africa !” They look at it, and repeat the word, till the whole burning and savage territory, with its black inhabitants and its lions, seems put into their possession. Ceuta and Tangier bring the old Moorish times before you ; “Ape's Hill,” which is pointed out, sounds fantastic and remote, “a wilderness of monkeys ;” and as all shores on which you do not clearly distinguish objects have a solemn and romantic look, you get rid of the petty effect of those vagabond Barbary States that occupy the coast, and think at once of Africa, the country of deserts and wild beasts, the “dry-nurse of lions,” as Horace, with a vigour beyond himself, calls it.

At Gibraltar you first have a convincing proof of the rarity of the southern atmosphere in the near look of the Straits, which seem but a few miles across, though they are thirteen.

But what a crowd of thoughts face one on entering the Mediterranean ! Grand as the sensation is in passing through the classical and romantic memories of the sea off the western coast of the Peninsula, it is little compared with this. Countless generations of the human race, from three quarters of the world, with all the religions, and the mythologies, and the genius, and the wonderful deeds, good and bad, that have occupied almost the whole attention of mankind, look you in the

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face from the galleries of that ocean-floor, rising one above another, till the tops are lost in heaven. The water at your feet is the same water that bathes the shores of Europe, of Africa, and of Asia—of Italy and Greece, and the Holy Land, and the lands of chivalry and romance, and pastoral Sicily, and the Pyramids, and Old Crete, and the Arabian city of Al Cairo, glittering in the magic lustre of the Thousand and One Nights. This soft air in your face comes from the grove of “Daphne by Orontes;” these lucid waters, that part from before you like oil, are the same from which Venus arose, pressing them out of her hair. In that quarter Vulcan fell—

“Dropt from the zenith like a falling star :”<sup>1</sup>

and there is Circe’s Island, and Calypso’s, and the promontory of Plato, and Ulysses wandering, and Cymon and Miltiades fighting, and Regulus crossing the sea to Carthage, and

“Damasco and Morocco, and Trebisond;  
And whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,  
When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell  
By Fontarabia.”<sup>2</sup>

The mind hardly separates truth from fiction in thinking of all these things, nor does it wish to do so. Fiction is Truth in another shape, and gives us close embraces. You may shut a door upon a ruby, and render it of no colour; but the colour shall not be the less enchanting for that, when the sun, the poet of the world, touches it with his golden pen. What we glow at and shed tears over, is as real as love and pity.

27th. Almost a calm. We proceeded at no greater rate than a mile an hour. I kept repeating to myself the word “Mediterranean;” not the word in prose, but the word in verse, as it stands at the beginning of the line:

[<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Lost*, Bk. i., line 742.]

[<sup>2</sup> “Damasco or Morocco, or Trebisond;  
Or whom Biserta, etc.”—

*Paradise Lost*, Bk. i., line 584.]



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“And the sea  
Mediterranean.”

We saw the mountains about Malaga, topped with snow. Velez Malaga is probably the place at which Cervantes landed on his return from captivity at Algiers. (See *Don Quixote*, vol. ii.) I had the pleasure of reading the passage, while crossing the line betwixt the two cities. It is something to sail by the very names of Granada and Andalusia. There was a fine sunset over the hills of Granada. I imagined it lighting up the Alhambra. The clouds were like great wings of gold and yellow and rose-colour, with a smaller minute sprinkle in one spot, like a shower of glowing stones from a volcano. You see very faint imitations of such lustre in England. A heavy dew succeeded; and a contrary wind at south-east, but very mild. At night, the reflection of the moon on the water was like silver snakes.

30th. Passed Cape de Gata. My wife was very ill, but observed that illness itself was not illness, compared to what she experienced in the winter voyage. She never complained, summer or winter. It is very distressing not to be able to give perfect comfort to patients of this generous description. The Mediterranean Sea, after the Channel, was like a basin of gold fish; but when the winds are contrary, the waves of it have a short uneasy motion, that fidget the vessel, and make one long for the nobler billows of the Atlantic. The wind, too, was singularly unpleasant,—moist and feverish. It continued contrary for several days, but became more agreeable, and sank almost into a calm on the 3rd of June.

The books with which I chiefly amused myself in the Mediterranean, were *Don Quixote* (for reasons which will be obvious to the reader), *Ariosto* and *Berni* (for similar reasons, their heroes having to do with the coasts of France and Africa), and Bayle's admirable *Essay on Comets*,<sup>1</sup> which I picked up at Plymouth. It

[<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), the celebrated author of the *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*. His *Pensées Diverses sur la Comete* appeared in 1682.]



*S. T. Coleridge.*  
*From a drawing by A. Wivell.*



## VOYAGE TO ITALY

is the book that put an end to the superstition about comets. It is full of amusement, like all his dialectics ; and holds together a perfect chain-armour of logic, the handler of which may cut his fingers with it at every turn, almost every link containing a double edge. A generation succeeds quietly to the good done it by such works, and its benefactor's name is sunk in the washy pretensions of those whom he has enriched. As to what seems defective in Bayle on the score of natural piety, the reader may supply that. A benevolent work, tending to do away real dishonour to things supernatural, will be no hindrance to any benevolent addition which others can bring it ; nor would Bayle, with his good-natured face, and the scholarly simplicity of his life, have found fault with it. But he was a soldier, after his fashion, with qualities, both positive and negative, fit to keep him one ; and some things must be dispensed with on the side of what is desirable, for the sake of the part that is taken in the overthrow of what is detestable. Him who inquisitors hate, angels may love.

7th. Saw the Colombrettes, and the land about Tortosa. Here commences the ground of Italian romance. It was on this part of the west of Spain, that the Paynim chivalry used to land, to go against Charlemagne. Here Orlando played him the tricks that got him the title of Furioso ; and from the port of Barcelona, Angelica and Medoro took ship for her dominion of Cathay. I confess I looked at these shores with a human interest, and could not help fancying that the keel of our vessel was crossing a real line, over which knights and lovers had passed. And so they have, both real and fabulous ; the former not less romantic, the latter scarcely less real ; to thousands, indeed, much more so ; for who knows of hundreds of real men and women that have crossed these waters, and suffered actual passion on those shores and hills ? And who knows not Orlando and all the hard blows he gave, and the harder blow than all given him by two happy lovers ; and the lovers themselves, the representatives of all the young love that ever was. I had a grudge



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of my own against Angelica, looking upon myself as jilted by those fine eyes which the painter has given her in the English picture; for I took her for a more sentimental person; but I excused her, seeing her beset and tormented by all those knights, who thought they earned a right to her by hacking and hewing; and I more than pardoned her, when I found that Medoro, besides being young and handsome, was a friend and a devoted follower. But what of that? They were both young and handsome; and love, at that time of life, goes upon no other merits, taking all the rest upon trust in the generosity of its wealth, and as willing to bestow a throne as a ribbon, to show the all-sufficiency of its contentment. Fair speed your sails over the lucid waters, ye lovers, on a lover-like sea! Fair speed them, yet never land; for where the poet has left you, there ought ye, as ye are, to be living for ever—for ever gliding about a summer-sea, touching at its flowery islands, and reposing beneath its moon.

9th. Completely fair wind at south-west. Saw Montserrat. The sunshine, reflected on the water from the lee studding-sail, was like shot silk. At half-past seven in the evening, night was risen in the east, while the sun was setting opposite. "Black night has come up already," said our poetical captain. A fair breeze all night and all next day, took us on at the rate of about five miles an hour, very refreshing after the calms and foul winds. We passed the Gulf of Lyons still more pleasantly than we did the Bay of Biscay, for in the latter there was a calm. In both of these places a little rough handling is generally looked for.

13th. The ALPS! It was the first time I had seen mountains. They had a fine sulky look, up aloft in the sky,—cold, lofty, and distant. I used to think that mountains would impress me but little; that by the same process of imagination reversed, by which a brook can be fancied a mighty river, with forests instead of verdure on its banks, a mountain could be made a mole-hill, over which we step. But one look convinced me to the contrary. I found I could elevate better than I could pull down; and I was glad of it. It was not that

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the sight of the Alps was necessary to convince me of "the being of a God," as it is said to have done somebody, or to put me upon any reflections respecting infinity and first causes, of which I have had enough in my time; but I seemed to meet for the first time a grand poetical thought in a material shape,—to see a piece of one's book-wonders realized,—something very earthly, yet standing between earth and heaven, like a piece of the antediluvian world looking out of the coldness of ages. I remember reading in a Review a passage from some book of travels, which spoke of the author standing on the sea-shore, and being led by the silence and the abstraction, and the novel grandeur of the objects around him, to think of the earth, not in its geographical relations, but as a planet in connection with other planets, and rolling in the immensity of space. With these thoughts I have been familiar, as I suppose every one has been who knows what solitude is, and has an imagination, and perhaps not the best health. But we grow used to the mightiest aspects of thought, as we do to the immortal visages of the moon and stars: and therefore the first sight of the Alps, though much less things than any of these, and a toy, as I had fancied, for imagination to recreate itself with after their company, startles us like the disproof of a doubt, or the verification of an early dream,—a ghost, as it were, made visible by daylight, and giving us an enormous sense of its presence and materiality.

In the course of the day, we saw the tableland about Monaco. It brought to my mind the ludicrous distress of the petty prince of that place, when on his return from interchanging congratulations with his new masters and the legitimates, he suddenly met his old master, Napoleon, on his return from Elba. Or did he meet him when going to Elba? I forget which; but the distresses and confusion of the prince were at all events as certain as the superiority and amusement of the great man. In either case, this was the natural division of things, and the circumstances would have been the same. A large grampus went by, heaping the water into clouds of foam. Another time, we saw a

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shark with his fin above water. The Alps were now fully and closely seen, and a glorious sunset took place. There was the greatest grandeur and the loveliest beauty. Among others was a small string of clouds, like rubies with facets, a very dark tinge being put here and there, as if by a painter, to set off the rest. Red is certainly the colour of beauty, and ruby the most beautiful of reds. It was in no commonplace spirit that Marlowe, in his list of precious stones, called them "beauteous rubies," but with exquisite gusto :

"Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,  
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,  
*Beauteous* rubies, sparkling diamonds," etc.<sup>1</sup>

They come upon you, among the rest, like the women of gems. All these colours we had about us in our Mediterranean sunsets ; and as if fortune would add to them by a freak of fancy, a little shoal of fish, sparkling as silver, leaped out of the water this afternoon, like a sprinkle of shillings. They were the anchovies, or Sardinias that we eat. They give a burlesque title to the sovereign of these seas, whom the Tuscans call "King of the Sardinias."<sup>2</sup>

We were now sailing up the angle of the Gulf of Genoa, its shore looking as Italian as possible, with groves and white villages. The names, too, were alluring,—Oneglia, Albenga, Savona ; the last, the birth-place of a sprightly poet (Frugoni), whose works I was acquainted with. The breeze was the strongest we had had yet, and not quite fair, but we made good head against it ; the queen-like city of Genoa, crowned with white palaces, sat at the end of the gulf, as if to receive us in state ; and at two o'clock, the waters being as blue as the sky, and all hearts rejoicing, we entered our Italian harbour, and heard Italian words.

Luckily for us, these first words were Tuscan. A pilot boat came out. Somebody asked a question which we did not hear, and the captain replied to it. "VA

[<sup>1</sup> Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, Act i., Sc. i.]

<sup>2</sup> Not, however, I suppose, the King now reigning : who has given despots other fish to fry.

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BENE," said the pilot, in a fine open voice, and turned the head of the boat with a tranquil dignity. "Va bene," thought I, indeed. "All goes well" truly. The words are delicious, and the omen good. My family have arrived so far in safety; we have but a little more voyage to make, a few steps to measure back in this calm Mediterranean; the weather is glorious; Italy looks like what we expected; in a day or two we shall hear of our friends: health and peace are before us, pleasure to others and profit to ourselves; and it is hard if we do not enjoy again, before long, the society of all our friends, both abroad and at home. In a day or two we received a letter from Shelley, saying that winds and waves, he hoped, would never part us more. —Alas! for that saying.

On the 28th of June, we set sail for Leghorn. The weather was still as fine as possible, and our concluding trip as agreeable; with the exception of a storm of thunder and lightning one night, which was the completest I ever saw. Our newspaper friend, "the oldest man living," ought to have been there to see it. The lightning fell in all parts of the sea, like pillars; or like great melted fires, suddenly dropped from a giant torch. Now it pierced the sea like rods; now fell like enormous flakes or tongues, suddenly swallowed up. At one time, it seemed to confine itself to a dark corner of the ocean, making formidable shows of gigantic and flashing lances (for it was the most perpendicular lightning I ever saw): then it dashed broadly at the whole sea, as if it would sweep us away in flame; and then came in random portions about the vessel, treading the waves hither and thither, like the legs of fiery spirits descending in wrath.

I now had a specimen (and confess I was not sorry to see it) of the fear which could enter even into the hearts of our "gallant *herroes*," when thrown into an unusual situation. The captain, almost the only man unmoved, or apparently so (and I really believe he was as fearless on all occasions, as his native valour, to say nothing of his brandy and water, could make him), was so exasperated with the alarm depicted in the faces of



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some of his crew, that he contemptuously knocked down the poor fellow at the helm [his brother, an apprentice seaman] and cried, "You are afraid, sir!" For our parts, having no fear of thunder and lightning, and not being fully aware perhaps of the danger to which vessels are exposed on these occasions, particularly if, like our Channel friend, they carry gunpowder (as most of them do, more or less), we were quite at our ease compared with our inexperienced friends about us, who had never witnessed anything of the like before, even in books. Besides, we thought it impossible for the Mediterranean to play us any serious trick,—that sunny and lucid basin, which we had beheld only in its contrast with a northern and a winter sea. Little did we think, that in so short a space of time, and somewhere about this very spot, a catastrophe would take place, that should put an end to all sweet thoughts, both of the Mediterranean and of the south.

### CHAPTER XVIII

#### RETURN TO FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH LORD BYRON AND THOMAS MOORE

[1822 (1809, 1813).]

**L**ORD BYRON was at Leghorn; the bad weather has disappeared; the vessel is about to enter port; and as everything concerning the noble lord is interesting, and the like may be said of his brother wit and poet, Thomas Moore, who introduced me to him, I will take this opportunity of doing what had better, perhaps, have been done when I first made his lordship's acquaintance; namely, state when it was that I first saw the one, and how I became acquainted with the other. My intimacy with Lord Byron is about to become closer; the results of it are connected both with him and his friend, and as these results are on the eve

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of commencing, my own interest in the subject is strengthened, and I call things to mind which I had suffered to escape me.

The first time I saw Lord Byron, he was rehearsing the part of Leander, under the auspices of Mr. Jackson,<sup>1</sup> the prize-fighter. It was in the river Thames, before his first visit to Greece.<sup>2</sup> There used to be a bathing-machine stationed on the eastern side of Westminster Bridge; and I had been bathing, and was standing on this machine adjusting my clothes, when I noticed a respectable-looking manly person, who was eyeing something at a distance. This was Mr. Jackson waiting for his pupil. The latter was swimming with somebody for a wager. I forgot what his tutor said of him; but he spoke in terms of praise. I saw nothing in Lord Byron at that time, but a young man who, like myself, had written a bad volume of poems; and though I had a sympathy with him on this account, and more respect for his rank than I was willing to suppose, my sympathy was not an agreeable one; so, contenting myself with seeing his lordship's head bob up and down in the water, like a buoy, I came away.

Lord Byron, when he afterwards came to see me in prison, was pleased to regret that I had not stayed. He told me, that the sight of my volume at Harrow had been one of his incentives to write verses, and that he had had the same passion for friendship which I had displayed in it. To my astonishment he quoted some of the lines, and would not hear me speak ill of them. His harbinger in the visit was Moore. Moore told me, that, besides liking my politics, his lordship liked the *Feast of the Poets*, and would be glad to make my acquaintance. I said I felt myself highly flattered, and should be proud to entertain his lordship as well as a poor patriot could. He was accordingly invited to dinner. His friend only stipulated that there should be "fish and vegetables for the noble bard;" his lordship at that time being anti-carnivorous in his eating. He came, and we passed a very pleasant afternoon,

[<sup>1</sup> John Jackson (1769-1845), "Gentleman Jackson," the pugilist.]

[<sup>2</sup> Byron first visited Greece in 1809.]

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talking of books, and school, and of their friend and brother poet the late Rev. Mr. Bowles,<sup>1</sup> whose sonnets were among the early inspirations of Coleridge.

Lord Byron, as the reader has seen, subsequently called on me in the prison several times. He used to bring books for the *Story of Rimini*, which I was then writing. He would not let the footman bring them in. He would enter with a couple of quartos under his arm; and give you to understand that he was prouder of being a friend and a man of letters, than a lord. It was thus that by flattering one's vanity he persuaded us of his own freedom from it; for he could see very well, that I had more value for lords than I supposed.

The noble poet was a warm politician, earnest in the cause of liberty. His failure in the House of Lords is well known. He was very candid about it; said he was much frightened, and should never be able to do anything that way. Lords of all parties came about him, and consoled him. He particularly mentioned Lord Sidmouth, as being unexpectedly kind.

It was very pleasant to see Lord Byron and Moore together. They harmonized admirably: though their knowledge of one another began in talking of a duel, in consequence of his lordship attacking the licence of certain early verses. Moore's acquaintance with myself (as far as concerned correspondence by letter) originated in the mention of him in the *Feast of the Poets*. He subsequently wrote an opera called the *Blue Stocking*,<sup>2</sup> respecting which he sent me a letter, at once deprecating, and warranting, objection to it. I was then editor of the *Examiner*: I did object to it, though with all ac-

[<sup>1</sup> Rev. William Lisle Bowles (1762-1850). Coleridge says in his *Biographia Literaria*, i. 13: "I had just entered on my seventeenth year when the Sonnets of Mr. Bowles, twenty in number (Second Edition, 1789, containing twenty-one Sonnets) and just then published in a quarto pamphlet, were first made known and presented to me. . . . As my school finances did not permit me to purchase copies, I made within a year and a half more than forty transcriptions," as presents for his friends. An edition of Pope's Works, edited by Bowles, in 1807, led to a controversy in which Byron took a part.]

[<sup>2</sup> *M.P.*; or the *Blue Stocking*, a comic opera (in prose with songs), London, 1811.]

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knowledgment of his genius. He came to see me, saying I was very much in the right; and an intercourse took place which was never ostensibly interrupted till I thought myself aggrieved by his opposition to the periodical work proposed to me by his noble friend. I say "thought myself aggrieved," because I have long since acquitted him of any intention towards me, more hostile than that of zeal in behalf of what he supposed best for his lordship. He was desirous of preventing his friend from coming before the Tory critics under a new and irritating aspect, at a time when it might be considered prudent to keep quiet, and propitiate objections already existing. The only thing which remained for me to complain of, was his not telling me so frankly; for this would have been a confidence which I deserved; and it would either have made me, of my own accord, object to the project at once, without the least hesitation, or, at all events, have been met by me with such a hearty sense of the objector's plain dealing, and in so friendly a spirit of difference, that no ill-will, I think, could have remained on either side. Moore, at least, was of too generous a spirit for it; and I was of too grateful a one.

Unfortunately, this plan was not adopted by his lordship's friends; and hence a series of bitter feelings on both sides, which, as I was the first to express them, so I do not hesitate to be the first to regret publicly, when on both sides they had tacitly been done away.

Moore fancied, among other things, that I meant to pain him by speaking of his small stature; and perhaps it was wrong to hazard a remark on so delicate a subject, however inoffensively meant; especially as it led to other personal characteristics, which might have seemed of less doubtful intention. But I felt only a painter's pleasure in taking the portrait; and I flattered myself that, as far as externals went, I abundantly evinced my good-will, not only by doing justice to all that was handsome and poetical in his aspect, and by noticing the beauty reported of his childhood, but by the things which I said of the greatness observable in so many little men in history,



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especially as recorded by Clarendon. In fact, this had been such a favourite subject with me, that some journalists concluded I must be short myself; which is not the case. Men of great action, I suspect, including the most heroical soldiers, have been for the most part of short stature, from the fabulous Tydeus, to Alexander and Agesilaus, and so downwards to Wellington and Napoleon. Nor have sages and poets, or any kind of genius, been wanting to the list; from the ancient philosopher who was obliged to carry lead in his pockets lest he should be blown away, down to Michael Angelo, and Montaigne, and Barrow, and Spenser himself, and the Falklands and Haleses of Clarendon, and Pope, and Steele, and Reynolds, and Mozart.

Moore's forehead was bony and full of character, with "bumps" of wit, large and radiant enough to transport a phrenologist. Sterne had such another. His eyes were as dark and fine as you would wish to see under a set of vine-leaves; his mouth generous and good humoured, with dimples; and his manner as bright as his talk, full of the wish to please and be pleased. He sang, and played with great taste on the pianoforte, as might be supposed from his musical compositions. His voice, which was a little hoarse in speaking (at least I used to think so), softened into a breath, like that of the flute, when singing. In speaking, he was emphatic in rolling the letter *r*, perhaps out of a despair of being able to get rid of the national peculiarity. The structure of his versification, when I knew him, was more artificial than it was afterwards; and in his serious compositions it suited him better. He had hardly faith enough in the sentiments of which he treated to give way to his impulses in writing, except when they were festive and witty; and artificial thoughts demand a similar embodiment. Both patriotism and personal experience, however, occasionally inspired him with lyric pathos; and in his naturally musical perception of the right principles of versification, he contemplated the fine, easy-playing, muscular style of Dryden, with a sort of perilous pleasure. I remember his quoting with delight a

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couplet of Dryden's, which came with a particular grace from his lips :—

“Let honour and preferment go for gold ;  
But glorious beauty is not to be sold.”<sup>1</sup>

Beside the pleasure I took in Moore's society as a man of wit, I had a great esteem for him as a man of candour and independence. His letters were full of all that was pleasant in him. As I was a critic at that time, and in the habit of giving my opinion of his works in the *Examiner*, he would write me his *opinion* of the *opinion*, with a mixture of good humour, admission, and deprecation, so truly delightful, and a sincerity of criticism on my own writings so extraordinary for so courteous a man, though with abundance of balm and eulogy, that never any subtlety of compliment could surpass it; and with all my self-confidence I never ceased to think that the honour was on my side, and that I could only deserve such candour of intercourse by being as ingenuous as himself. This admiring regard for him he completed by his behaviour to an old patron of his, who, not thinking it politic to retain him openly by his side, proposed to facilitate his acceptance of a place under the Tories; an accommodation which Moore rejected as an indignity. I thought, afterwards, that a man of such a spirit should not have condescended to attack Rousseau and poor foolish Madame de Warens, out of a desire to right himself with polite life, and with the memory of some thoughtless productions of his own. Polite life was only too happy to possess him in his graver days; and the thoughtless productions, however to be regretted on reflection, were reconcileable to reflection itself on the same grounds on which Nature herself and all her exuberance is to be reconciled. At least, without presuming to judge nature in the abstract, an ultra-sensitive and enjoying poet is himself a production of nature; and we may rest assured, that she will no more judge him with harshness ultimately, than she will condemn the excess of her own vines and fig-trees.

[<sup>1</sup> Dryden's Epilogue to N. Lee's play, *Mithridates, King of Pontus*, 1678.]

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## CHAPTER XIX

### LORD BYRON IN ITALY—SHELLEY—PISA

[1822 (JUNE TO SEPTEMBER).]

AS I am now about to re-enter into the history of my connection with Lord Byron, I will state in what spirit I mean to do it.

It is related of an Italian poet (Alamanni), that having in his younger days bitterly satirized the house of Austria, he found himself awkwardly situated in more advanced life, when, being in exile, and employed by Francis the First, the king sent him on an embassy to the court of Charles the Fifth. One of his sarcasms, in particular, had been very offensive. Alluding to the Austrian crest, the two-headed eagle, he had described the imperial house as a monstrous creature,

Which bore two beaks, the better to devour.  
("Che per più divorar, due becchi porta.")

Charles had treasured this passage in his mind; and when the ambassador, perhaps forgetting it altogether, or trusting to its being forgotten, had terminated a fine oration, full of compliments to the power which he had so angrily painted, the Emperor, without making any other observation, calmly said—

"Which bore two beaks, the better to devour."

"Sir," said Alamanni, not hesitating, or betraying any confusion (which shows that he was either prepared for the rebuke, or was a man of great presence of mind), "when I wrote that passage I spoke as a poet, to whom it is permitted to use fictions; but now I speak as an ambassador, who is bound to utter truth. I spoke then as a young man; but I now speak as a man advanced in years. I spoke as one who was agitated by grief and passion at the wretched condition of my country; but now I am calm, and free from

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passion." Charles rose from his seat, and laying his hand on the shoulder of the ambassador, said, in the kindest manner, that the loss of his country ought not to grieve him, since he had found such a patron in Francis; and that to an honest man every place was his country.

I would apply this anecdote to some things which I have formerly said of Lord Byron.<sup>1</sup> I do not mean that I ever wrote any fictions about him. I wrote nothing which I did not feel to be true, or think so. But I can say with Alamanni, that I was then a young man, and that I am now advanced in years. I can say, that I was agitated by grief and anger, and that I am now free from anger. I can say, that I was far more alive to other people's defects than to my own, and that I am now sufficiently sensible of my own to show to others the charity which I need myself. I can say, moreover, that apart from a little allowance for provocation, I do not think it right to exhibit what is amiss, or may be thought amiss, in the character of a fellow-creature, out of any feeling but unmistakeable sorrow, or the wish to lessen evils which society itself may have caused.

Lord Byron, with respect to the points on which he erred and suffered (for on all others, a man like himself, poet and wit, could not but give and receive pleasure), was the victim of a bad bringing up, of a series of false positions in society, of evils arising from the mistakes of society itself, of a personal disadvantage (which his feelings exaggerated), nay, of his very advantages of person, and of a face so handsome as to render him an object of admiration. Even the lameness, of which he had such a resentment, only softened the admiration with tenderness.

But he did not begin life under good influences. He

[<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt is of course referring to his work, *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries, with Recollections of the Author's Life and his Visit to Italy*. Henry Colburn, New Burlington Street, 1828, 4to—which has rightly been described as the greatest mistake of Hunt's life. The *Autobiography* is a *réchauffé* of this book, the offending passages about Byron being expunged, and some particulars of Hunt's later life added.]



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had a mother, herself, in all probability, the victim of bad training, who would fling the dishes from table at his head, and tell him he would be a scoundrel like his father. His father, who was cousin to the previous lord, had been what is called a man upon town, and was neither rich nor very respectable. The young lord, whose means had not yet recovered themselves, went to school, noble but poor, expecting to be in the ascendant with his title, yet kept down by the inconsistency of his condition. He left school to put on the cap with the gold tuft, which is worshipped at college:—he left college to fall into some of the worst hands on the town:—his first productions were contemptuously criticised, and his genius was thus provoked into satire:—his next were over-praised, which increased his self-love:—he married when his temper had been soured by difficulties, and his will and pleasure pampered by the sex:—and he went companionless into a foreign country, where all this perplexity could repose without being taught better, and where the sense of a lost popularity could be drowned in licence.

Should we not wonder that he retained so much of the grand and beautiful in his writings?—that the indestructible tendency of the poetical to the good should have struggled to so much purpose through faults and inconsistencies?—rather than quarrel with his would-be misanthropy and his effeminate wailings? The worst things which he did were to gird resentfully at women, and to condescend to some other pettiness of conduct which he persuaded himself were self-defences on his own part, and merited by his fellow-creatures. But he was never incapable of generosity: he was susceptible of the tenderest emotions; and though I doubt, from a certain proud and stormy look about the upper part of his face, whether his command of temper could ever have been quite relied on, yet I cannot help thinking, that had he been properly brought up, there would have been nobody capable of more lasting and loving attachments. The lower part of the face was a model of beauty.

I am sorry I ever wrote a syllable respecting Lord

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Byron which might have been spared. I have still to relate my connection with him, but it will be related in a different manner. Pride, it is said, will have a fall: and I must own, that on this subject I have experienced the truth of the saying. I had prided myself—I should pride myself now if I had not been thus rebuked—on not being one of those who talk against others. I went counter to this feeling in a book; and to crown the absurdity of the contradiction, I was foolish enough to suppose that the very fact of my so doing would show that I had done it in no other instance! that having been thus public in the error, credit would be given me for never having been privately so! Such are the delusions inflicted on us by self-love. When the consequence was represented to me as characterized by my enemies, I felt, enemies though they were, as if I blushed from head to foot. It is true I had been goaded to the task by misrepresentations:—I had resisted every other species of temptation to do it:—and, after all, I said more in his excuse, and less to his disadvantage, than many of those who reproved me. But enough. I owed the acknowledgment to him and to myself; and I shall proceed on my course with a sigh for both, and I trust in the good-will of the sincere.

To return, then, to my arrival at Leghorn.

In the harbour of Leghorn I found Mr. Trelawny,<sup>1</sup> of the old Cornish family of that name, since known as the author of the *Younger Brother*. He was standing with his knight-errant aspect, dark, handsome, and mustachioed, in Lord Byron's boat, the *Bolivar*, of which he had taken charge for his lordship. In a day or two I went to see my noble acquaintance, who was in what the Italians call villeggiatura at Monte Nero; that is to say, enjoying a country house for the season. I there became witness to a singular adventure, which

[<sup>1</sup> Edward John Trelawny (1792-1881). His *Recollections of Shelley and Byron*, 1858, contains the most vivid and delightful sketch of Shelley's last days that exists. Sir John Millais painted Trelawny as the old sailor in his picture "The North-West Passage." Sixty years after the death of Shelley Trelawny was laid to rest beside his friend in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome.]

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seemed to make me free of Italy and stilettoes before I had well set foot in the country.

The day was very hot ; the road to Monte Nero was very hot, through dusty suburbs ; and when I got there, I found the hottest looking house I ever saw. It was salmon colour. Think of this, flaring over the country in a hot Italian sun !

But the greatest of all the heats was within. Upon seeing Lord Byron, I hardly knew him, he was grown so fat ; and he was longer in recognising me, I had grown so thin. He took me into an inner room, and introduced me to Madame Guiccioli,<sup>1</sup> then very young as well as handsome, who was in a state of great agitation. Her face was flushed, her eyes lit up, and her hair (which she wore hanging loose), streaming as if in disorder. The Conte Pietro, her brother, came in presently, also in a state of agitation, and having his arm in a sling. I then learned that a quarrel having taken place among the servants, the young Count had interfered, and been stabbed. He was very angry ; Madame Guiccioli was more so, and could not admit the charitable comments of Lord Byron, who was for making light of the matter. They seemed to think the honour of their nation at stake. Indeed, there was a look in the business not a little formidable ; for though the stab was not much, the inflictor of it threatened more, and was at that minute keeping watch outside, with the avowed intention of assaulting the first person that issued forth. I looked out of the window, and met his eye glaring upwards like a tiger. He had a red cap on like a sansculotte, and a most sinister aspect, dreary and meagre—that of a proper caitiff.

How long things had continued in this state I cannot say ; but the hour was come when Lord Byron and his friend took their evening drive, and the thing was to be put an end to somehow. A servant had been despatched for the police, and was not returned.

<sup>1</sup> [Teresa Gamba, Countess Guiccioli (1801–73). At the time of her marriage she was 16 and the Count 60. She afterwards married the French Marquis de Boissey. Her book, *Lord Byron Jugé par les Témoins de sa Vie*, was published in 1851.]

## LORD BYRON IN ITALY—SHELLEY—PISA

At length we set out, the lady earnestly entreating his lordship to keep back, and all of us uniting to keep in advance of Conte Pietro, who was exasperated.

It was a curious moment for a stranger from England. I fancied myself pitched into one of the scenes in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Everything was new, foreign, and vehement. There was the lady, flushed and dishevelled, exclaiming against the "scelerato"; the young Count, wounded and threatening; and the assassin waiting for us with his knife. Nobody, however, could have put a better face on the matter than Lord Byron did,—composed, and endeavouring to compose: and as to myself, I was so occupied with the whole scene, that I had not time to be frightened. Forth we issue at the house door, all squeezing to have the honour of being first, when a termination is put to the tragedy by the man's throwing himself on a bench, extending his arms, and bursting into tears. His cap was half over his eyes; his face gaunt, ugly, and unshaved; his appearance altogether more squalid and miserable than an Englishman would conceive it possible to find in such an establishment. This blessed figure reclined weeping and wailing, and asking pardon for his offence; and to crown all, he requested Lord Byron to kiss him.

The noble lord conceived such an excess of charity superfluous. He pardoned him, but said he must not think of remaining in his service; upon which the man renewed his weeping and wailing, and continued kissing his hand. I was then struck with the footing on which the gentry and their servants stand with each other in Italy, and the good-nature with which the strongest exhibitions of anger can be followed up. Conte Pietro, who was full of good qualities (for though he was here with his sister's lover, we must not judge of Italian customs by English), accepted the man's hand, and even shook it heartily; and Madame Guiccioli, though unable to subside so quickly from her state of indignant exaltation, looked in relenting sort, and speedily accorded him her grace also, seeing my lord had forgiven him. The man was all penitence and



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wailing, but he was obliged to quit. The police would have forced him, if he had not been dismissed. He left the country, and called in his way on Shelley, who was shocked at his appearance, and gave him some money out of his very antipathy; for he thought nobody would help such an ill-looking fellow, if he did not.

The unpleasant part of the business did not end here. It was, remotely, one of the causes of Lord Byron's leaving Italy; for it increased the awkwardness of his position with the Tuscan government, and gave a further unsteadiness to his proceedings. His friends, the Gambas, were already only upon sufferance in Tuscany. They had been obliged to quit their native country Romagna, on account of their connection with the Carbonari; and Lord Byron, who had identified himself with their fortunes, became a party to their wanderings, and to the footing on which they stood wherever they were permitted to abide. The Grand Duke's government had given him to understand that they were at liberty to reside in Tuscany, provided they were discreet. A *fracas* which happened in the streets of Pisa, a little before I came, had given a shock to the tranquillity of this good understanding; the retinue of the Gambas having been the foremost persons concerned in it: and now, another of their men having caused a disturbance, the dilemma was completed. Lord Byron's residence in Tuscany was made uneasy to him. It was desired that he should separate himself from the Gambas: and though it was understood that a little courtesy on his part towards the Grand Duke and Duchess, the latter of whom was said to be particularly desirous of seeing him at court, would have produced a *carte-blanche* for all parties, yet he chose to take neither of those steps; he therefore returned to his house at Pisa, only to reside there two or three months longer; after which he quitted the grand-ducal territory, and departed for Genoa.

From Monte Nero I returned to Leghorn; and, taking leave of our vessel, we put up at an hotel. Mr. Shelley then came to us from his *villeggiatura* at Lerici.

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His town abode, as well as Lord Byron's, was at Pisa. I will not dwell upon the moment..

Leghorn is a polite Wapping, with a square and a theatre. The country around is uninteresting when you become acquainted with it; but to a stranger the realization of anything he has read about is a delight, especially of such things as vines hanging from trees and the sight of the Apennines. It is pleasant, too, to a lover of books, when at Leghorn, to think that Smollett once lived there; not indeed, happily, for he was very ill, and besides living there, died there. But genius gives so much pleasure (and must also have received so much in the course of its life) that the memory of its troubles is overcome by its renown. Smollett once lived, as Lord Byron did, at Monte Nero; and he was buried in the Leghorn cemetery.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Shelley accompanied us from Leghorn to Pisa, in order to see us fixed in our new abode. Lord Byron left Monte Nero at the same time, and joined us. We occupied the ground-floor of his lordship's house, the Casa Lanfranchi, on the river Arno, which runs through the city. Divided tenancies of this kind are common in Italy, where few houses are in possession of one family. The families in this instance, as in others, remained distinct. The ladies at the respective heads of them never exchanged even a word. It was set to the account of their want of acquaintance with their respective languages; and the arrangement, I believe, which in every respect thus tacitly took place, was really, for many reasonable considerations, objected to by nobody.

The Casa Lanfranchi, which had been the mansion of the great Pisan family whose ancestors figure in Dante, is said to have been built by Michael Angelo, and is worthy of him. It is in a bold and broad style throughout, with those harmonious graces of propor-

[<sup>1</sup>Smollett spent his last days near Antignano by Monte Nero, about two miles out of Leghorn. He died on September 17, 1771, and was buried in the old English cemetery in the Via degli Elise at Leghorn. A Latin inscription was written for his tomb by John Armstrong, the poet.]

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tion which are sure to be found in an Italian mansion. The outside is of rough marble.

We had not been in the house above an hour or two, when my friend brought the celebrated surgeon, Vaccà,<sup>1</sup> to see Mrs. Hunt. He had a pleasing intelligent face, and was the most gentlemanlike Italian I ever saw. Vaccà pronounced his patient to be in a decline; and little hope was given us by others that she would survive beyond the year. She lived till the year 1857, and Vaccà had been dead many years before. I do not say this to his disparagement, for he was very skilful, and deserved his celebrity. But it appears to me, from more than one remarkable instance, that there is a superstition about what are called declines and consumptions, from which the most eminent of the profession are not free. I suspect, indeed I may say I know, that many people of this tendency, or at least supposed to be of it, may reach, with a proper mode of living, to as good a period of existence as most others. The great secret in this as in all other cases, and, indeed, in almost all moral as well as physical cases of ill, seems to be in diet and regimen. If some demi-god could regulate for mankind what they should eat and drink, and by what bodily treatment circulate their blood, he would put an end to half the trouble which the world undergo, some of the most romantic sorrows with which they flatter themselves not excepted. The case, however, in the present instance was perhaps peculiar, and may not before have been witnessed by Vaccà. The expectoration, at all events, of blood itself, and this too sometimes in alarming quantities, and never entirely without recurrence, lasted throughout a life of no ordinary duration.

The next day, while in the drawing-room with Lord Byron, I had a curious specimen of Italian manners. It was like a scene in an opera. One of his servants, a young man, suddenly came in smiling, and was followed by his sister, a handsome brunette, in a bodice and sleeves, and her hair uncovered. She

<sup>1</sup> [André Vaccà Berlinghiera (1772-1826). He received a part of his medical education in England.]

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advanced to his lordship to welcome him back to Pisa, and present him with a basket of flowers. In doing this, she took his hand and kissed it; then turned to the stranger, and kissed his hand also. I thought we ought to have struck up ■ quartett.

It is the custom of Italy, as it used to be in England, for inferiors to kiss your hand in coming and going. There is an air of good-will in it that is very agreeable, though the implied sense of inferiority is hardly so pleasant. Servants have a custom also of wishing you a "happy evening" (*felice sera*) when they bring in lights. To this you may respond in like manner; after which it seems impossible for the sun to "go down on the wrath," if there is any, of either party.

In a day or two Shelley took leave of us to return to Lerici for the rest of the season, meaning, however, to see us more than once in the interval. I spent one delightful afternoon with him, wandering about Pisa, and visiting the cathedral. On the night of the same day he took a post-chaise for Leghorn, intending next morning to depart with his friend Captain Williams<sup>1</sup> for Lerici. I entreated him, if the weather were violent, not to give way to his daring spirit and venture to sea. He promised me he would not; and it seems that he did set off later than he otherwise would have done, apparently at a more favourable moment.<sup>2</sup> I never beheld him more.

The same night there was a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, which made us very anxious; but we hoped our friend had arrived before then. When, some days later, Trelawny came to Pisa, and told us he was missing, I underwent one of the sensations which we read of in books, but seldom experience: I was tongue-tied with horror.

[<sup>1</sup> Edward Ellerker Williams (1793-1822), was at Eton with Shelley. Beginning life in the navy he afterwards joined ■ dragoon regiment and served for some years in India. His daughter married a son of Leigh Hunt.]

[<sup>2</sup> This is a mistake. Shelley set off *earlier* than he intended, his departure being hastened by ■ desponding note which he received from his wife.—T. H. Trelawny states that it was past 2 o'clock on Monday, July 8th, 1822, that Shelley embarked on his fateful voyage.]



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A dreadful interval took place of more than a week, during which, every inquiry and every fond hope were exhausted. At the end of that period our worst fears were confirmed. A body had been washed on shore, near the town of Via Reggio, which, by the dress and stature, was known to be our friend's. Keats's last volume also (the *Lamia*, etc.<sup>1</sup>), was found open in the jacket pocket. He had probably been reading it when surprised by the storm. It was my copy. I had told him to keep it till he gave it me with his own hands. So I would not have it from any other. It was burnt with his remains. The body of his friend Mr. Williams was found near a tower, four miles distant from its companion. That of the third party in the boat, Charles Vivian, the seaman, was not discovered till nearly three weeks afterwards.<sup>2</sup>

The remains of Shelley and Mr. Williams were burnt after the good ancient fashion, and gathered into coffers [those of Williams on the 15th of August, of Shelley on the 16th.—T.H.]. Those of Mr. Williams were subsequently taken to England. Shelley's were interred at Rome,<sup>3</sup> in the Protestant burial ground, the place which he had so touchingly described in record-

[<sup>1</sup> *Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems*, 1820. Another book, a volume of Sophocles, was also found in Shelley's pocket. It is now preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.]

[<sup>2</sup> A story was current in Leghorn which conjecturally helped to explain the shipwreck of Shelley's boat. It went out to sea in rough weather, and yet was followed by a native boat. When Shelley's yacht was raised, a large hole was found stove in the stern. Shelley had on board a sum of money in dollars; and the supposition is, that the men in the other boat had tried to board Shelley's piratically, but had desisted because the collision caused the English boat to sink; and they abandoned it because the men saved would have become their accusers. The only facts in support of this conjectural story are the alleged following of the native boat, and the damage to the stern of Shelley's boat, otherwise not very accountable.—T. H.]

[<sup>3</sup> Shelley's ashes were sent to Rome, where they arrived early in December, 1822. It was desired to lay him beside his little son, William, who was buried in the old Protestant cemetery, but as the child's grave could not be found, the poet's ashes were interred in the new cemetery. In the following spring, Trelawny exhumed Shelley's ashes, and placed them in their present resting-place under the old Roman wall, and beneath the shadow of a pyramid, said to be the tomb of Caius Cestius. The grave was covered with a stone bearing the well-known Latin inscription written by Leigh Hunt: "Percy

## LORD BYRON IN ITALY—SHELLEY—PISA

ing its reception of Keats. The ceremony of the burning was alike beautiful and distressing. Trelawny, who had been the chief person concerned in ascertaining the fate of his friends, completed his kindness by taking the most active part on this last mournful occasion. He and his friend Captain Shenley<sup>1</sup> were first upon the ground, attended by proper assistants. Lord Byron and myself arrived shortly afterwards. His lordship got out of his carriage, but wandered away from the spectacle, and did not see it. I remained inside the carriage, now looking on, now drawing back with feelings that were not to be witnessed.

None of the mourners, however, refused themselves the little comfort of supposing, that lovers of books and antiquity, like Shelley and his companion, Shelley in particular with his Greek enthusiasm, would not have been sorry to foresee this part of their fate. The mortal part of him, too, was saved from corruption; not the least extraordinary part of his history. Among the materials for burning, as many of the gracefuller and more classical articles as could be procured—frankincense, wine, etc.—were not forgotten; and to these Keats's volume was added. The beauty of the flame arising from the funeral pile was extraordinary. The weather was beautifully fine. The Mediterranean, now soft and lucid, kissed the shore as if to make peace with it. The yellow sand and blue sky were intensely contrasted with one another: marble mountains touched the air with coolness; and the flame of the fire bore away towards heaven in vigorous amplitude, waving and quivering with a brightness of inconceivable beauty. It seemed as though it contained the glassy essence of vitality. You might have expected ■

Bysshe Shelley—cor cordium—natus iv Aug. MDCCXCII—obiit viii Jul. MDCCCXXII." The verses from *The Tempest*—

"Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange."

were added by Trelawny.]

[<sup>1</sup> Edward Wyndham Harrington Shenley, 1800-1878.]

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seraphic countenance to look out of it, turning once more before it departed, to thank the friends that had done their duty.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, see how extremes can appear to meet even on occasions the most overwhelming; nay, even by reason of them; for as cold can perform the effect of fire, and burn us, so can despair put on the monstrous aspect of mirth. On returning from one of our visits to this sea-shore, we dined and drank; I mean, Lord Byron and myself;—dined little, and drank too much. Lord Byron had not shone that day, even in his cups, which usually brought out his best qualities. As to myself, I had bordered upon emotions which I have never suffered myself to indulge, and which, foolishly as well as impatiently, render calamity, as somebody termed it, “an affront, and not a misfortune.” The barouche drove rapidly through the forest of Pisa. We sang, we laughed, we shouted. I even felt a gaiety the more shocking, because it was real and a relief. What the coachman thought of us, God knows; but he helped to make up a ghastly trio. He was a good-tempered fellow, and an affectionate husband and father; yet he had the reputation of having offered his master to kill a man. I wish to have no such waking dream again. It was worthy of a German ballad.

Shelley, when he died, was in his thirtieth year. His figure was tall and slight, and his constitution consumptive. He was subject to violent spasmodic pains, which would sometimes force him to lie on the ground till they were over; but he had always a kind word to give to those about him, when his pangs allowed him to speak. In this organization, as well as in some other respects, he resembled the German poet, Schiller. Though well-turned, his shoulders were bent a little,

[<sup>1</sup> In his *Recollections*, Trelawny describes how he snatched Shelley's heart out of the burning pyre. He gave this relic to Hunt shortly afterwards, who later, but not without earnest entreaty, resigned it to Mary Shelley. “After her death,” says Mr. Dowden, “in a copy of the Pisa edition of *Adonais*, at the page which tells how death is swallowed up in immortality, was found under a silken covering the embrowned ashes, now shrunk and withered, which she had secretly treasured.”]

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owing to premature thought and trouble. The same causes had touched his hair with grey; and though his habits of temperance and exercise gave him a remarkable degree of strength, it is not supposed that he could have lived many years. He used to say that he had lived three times as long as the calendar gave out; which he would prove, between jest and earnest, by some remarks on Time,

“That would have puzzled that stout Stagyrity.”<sup>1</sup>

Like the Stagyrity's, his voice was high and weak. His eyes were large and animated, with a dash of wildness in them; his face small, but well shaped, particularly the mouth and chin, the turn of which was very sensitive and graceful. His complexion was naturally fair and delicate, with a colour in the cheeks. He had brown hair, which, though tinged with grey, surmounted his face well, being in considerable quantity, and tending to a curl. His side-face, upon the whole, was deficient in strength, and his features would not have told well in a bust; but when fronting and looking at you attentively his aspect had a certain seraphical character that would have suited a portrait of John the Baptist, or the angel whom Milton describes as holding a reed “tip with fire.” Nor would the most religious mind, had it known him, have objected to the comparison; for, with all his scepticism, Shelley's disposition was truly said to have been anything but irreligious. A person of much eminence for piety in our times has well observed, that the greatest want of religious feeling is not to be found among the greatest infidels, but among those who never think of religion except as a matter of course. The leading feature of Shelley's character may be said to have been a natural piety. He was pious towards nature, towards his friends, towards the whole human race, towards the meanest insect of the forest. He did himself an injustice with the public in using the popular name of the Supreme Being inconsiderately. He identified it solely with the

[<sup>1</sup> “And half had staggered that stout Stagyrity.” C. Lamb's *Sonnet written at Cambridge Aug. 15, 1819.*]



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most vulgar and tyrannical notions of a God made after the worst human fashion; and did not sufficiently reflect that it was often used by a juster devotion to express a sense of the great Mover of the universe. An impatience in contradicting worldly and pernicious notions of a supernatural power led his own aspirations to be misconstrued; for though, in the severity of his dialectics, and particularly in moments of despondency, he sometimes appeared to be hopeless of what he most desired—and though he justly thought that a Divine Being would prefer the increase of benevolence and good before any praise, or even recognition of himself (a reflection worth thinking of by the intolerant), yet there was in reality no belief to which he clung with more fondness than that of some great pervading “Spirit of Intellectual Beauty;” as may be seen in his aspirations on that subject. He assented warmly to an opinion which I expressed in the cathedral at Pisa, while the organ was playing, that a truly Divine religion might yet be established, if charity were really made the principle of it, instead of faith. |

Music affected him deeply. He had also a delicate perception of the beauties of sculpture. It is not one of the least evidences of his conscientious turn of mind that, with the inclination and the power to surround himself in Italy with all the grace of life, he made no sort of attempt that way; finding other uses for his money, and not always satisfied with himself for indulging even in the luxury of a boat. When he bought elegancies of any kind it was to give them away. Boating was his great amusement. He loved the mixture of action and repose which he found in it; and delighted to fancy himself gliding away to Utopian isles and bowers of enchantment. But he would give up any pleasure to do a deed of kindness. Indeed, he may be said to have made the whole comfort of his life a sacrifice to what he thought the wants of society.

Temperament and early circumstances conspired to make him a reformer, at a time of life when few begin to think for themselves; and it was his misfortune, as

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far as immediate reputation was concerned, that he was thrown upon society with a precipitancy and vehemence which rather startled others with fear for themselves, than allowed them to become sensible of the love and zeal that impelled him. He was like a spirit that had darted out of its orb, and found itself in another world. I used to tell him that he had come from the planet Mercury. When I heard of the catastrophe that overtook him it seemed as if this spirit, not sufficiently constituted like the rest of the world to obtain their sympathy, yet gifted with a double portion of love for all living things, had been found dead in a solitary corner of the earth, its wings stiffened, its warm heart cold; the relics of a misunderstood nature, slain by the ungenial elements.

We remained but three months at Pisa subsequently to this calamitous event. We then went to Genoa, where we received the first number of the periodical work, the *Liberal*,<sup>1</sup> which Lord Byron had invited me to set up, and in which Shelley was to have assisted. He did assist; for his beautiful translation of the *May Day Night*, from Goethe, appeared in the first number.

But more of this publication when I come to Genoa. I will first say a few words respecting the way in which we passed our time at Pisa, and then speak of the city itself and its highly interesting features, which are not so well known as they should be.

Our manner of life was this. Lord Byron, who used to sit up at night writing *Don Juan* (which he did under the influence of gin and water), rose late in the morning. He breakfasted; read; lounged about, singing an air, generally out of Rossini; then took a bath, and was dressed; and coming downstairs, was heard, still singing, in the court-yard, out of which the garden ascended, by a few steps, at the back of the house. The servants, at the same time, brought out two or

[<sup>1</sup> The *Liberal*. Verse and prose from the South. London, printed by and for John Hunt, 22 Old Bond Street, 1822-1823. Only four quarterly numbers (forming two vols.) were published. The first appeared in September, 1822. The title of this periodical was originally to have been the *Hesperides*.]

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three chairs. My study, a little room in a corner, with an orange tree at the window, looked upon this court-yard. I was generally at my writing when he came down, and either acknowledged his presence by getting up and saying something from the window, or he called out "Leontius!" (a name into which Shelley had pleasantly converted that of "Leigh Hunt") and came up to the window with some jest or other challenge to conversation. His dress, as at Monte Nero, was a nankin jacket, with white waistcoat and trousers, and a cap either velvet or linen, with a shade to it. In his hand was a tobacco-box, from which he helped himself occasionally to what he thought a preservative from getting too fat. Perhaps, also, he supposed it good for the teeth. We then lounged about, or sat and talked, Madame Guiccioli, with her sleek tresses, descending after her toilet to join us. The garden was small and square, but plentifully stocked with oranges and other shrubs; and, being well watered, it looked very green and refreshing under the Italian sky. The lady generally attracted us up into it, if we had not been there before. Her appearance might have reminded an English spectator of Chaucer's heroine—

"Yclothed was she, fresh for to devise.  
Her yellow hair was braided in a tress  
Behind her back, a yardè long, I guess:  
And in the garden (as the sun uprist)  
She walketh up and down, where as her list:"<sup>1</sup>

and then, as Dryden has it:—

"At every turn she made a little stand,  
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand."<sup>2</sup>

Madame Guiccioli, who was at that time about twenty, was handsome and lady-like, with an agreeable manner, and a voice not partaking of the Italian fervour too much to be gentle. She had just enough of it to give her speaking a grace. None of her graces appeared

<sup>[1]</sup> Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*, line 1050.]

<sup>[2]</sup> Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite; or the Knight's Tale*, Bk. 1, line 191.]

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entirely free from art ; nor, on the other hand, did they betray enough of it to give you an ill opinion of her sincerity and good humour. I was told that her Romagnese dialect was observable ; but to me, at that time, all Italian in a lady's mouth was Tuscan pearl ; and she trolled it over her lip, pure or not, with that sort of conscious grace which seems to belong to the Italian language as a matter of right. I amused her with speaking bad Italian out of Ariosto, and saying *speme* for *speranza* ; in which she good-naturedly found something pleasant and *pellegrino* ; keeping all the while that considerate countenance for which a foreigner has so much to be grateful. Her hair was what the poet has described, or rather *blonde*, with an inclination to yellow ; a very fair and delicate yellow, at all events, and within the limits of the poetical. She had regular features, of the order properly called handsome, in distinction to prettiness or to piquancy ; being well proportioned to one another, large rather than otherwise, but without coarseness, and more harmonious than interesting. Her nose was the handsomest of the kind I ever saw ; and I have known her both smile very sweetly, and look intelligently, when Lord Byron has said something kind to her.

In the evening we sometimes rode or drove out, generally into the country. The city I first walked through in company with Shelley, but speedily, alas ! explored it by myself, or with my children. The state of my wife's health would not suffer her to quit her apartment.

Let the reader imagine a small white city, with a tower leaning at one end of it, trees on either side, and blue mountains for the background ; and he may fancy he sees Pisa, as the traveller sees it in coming from Leghorn. Add to this, in summer-time, fields of corn on all sides, bordered with hedgerow trees, and the festoons of vines, of which he has so often read, hanging from tree to tree ; and he may judge of the impression made upon an admirer of Italy, who is in Tuscany for the first time.

In entering the city, the impression is not injured.



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What looked white in the distance, remains as pure and fair on closer acquaintance. You cross a bridge, and cast your eye up the whole extent of the city one way, the river Arno (the river of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio) winding through the middle of it under two more bridges; and fair elegant houses of good size bordering the white pavement on either side. This is the Lung' Arno, or street "Along the Arno." The mountains, in which you fancy you see the marble veins (for it is from these that the marble of Carrara comes), tower away beautifully at the further end, and, owing to the clear atmosphere, seem to be much nearer than they are. The Arno, which is about as wide perhaps as the Isis at Oxford, is sandy-coloured, and in the summer-time shrunken; but still it is the river of the great Tuscan writers, the visible possessor of the name we have all heard a thousand times; and we feel what a true thing is that which is called ideal.

The first novelty that strikes you, after your dreams and matter-of-fact have recovered from the surprise of their introduction to one another, is the singular fairness and new look of houses that have been standing hundred of years. This is owing to the dryness of the Italian atmosphere. Antiquity refuses to look ancient in Italy. It insists upon retaining its youthfulness of aspect. The consequence at first is a mixed feeling of admiration and disappointment; for we miss the venerable. The houses seem as if they ought to have sympathized more with humanity, and were as cold and as hard-hearted as their materials. But you discover that Italy is the land, not of the venerable, but the beautiful; and cease to look for old age in the chosen country of the Apollo and the Venus. The only real antiquities are those in Dante and the oldest painters, who treat of the Bible in an ancient style. Among the mansions on the Lung' Arno is one entirely fronted with marble, and marble so pure and smooth that you can see your face in it. It is in a most graceful style of architecture; and over the door has a mysterious motto and symbol. The symbol is an

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actual fetter, attached with great nicety to the middle stone over the doorway: the motto, *Alla Giornata* (By the Day, or the Day's Work). The allusion is supposed to be to some captivity undergone by one of the Lanfreducci family, the proprietors: but nobody knows. Further up on the same side of the way, is the old ducal palace, said to be the scene of the murder of Don Garcia by his father, which is the subject of one of Alfieri's tragedies: and between both, a little before you come to the old palace, is the mansion before mentioned, in which he resided, and which still belongs to the family of Lanfranchi, formerly one of the most powerful in Pisa. They were among the nobles who conspired against the ascendancy of Count Ugolino, and who were said, but not truly, to have wreaked that revenge on him and his children, recorded without a due knowledge of the circumstances by Dante. The tower in which Ugolino perished was subsequently called the Tower of Famine. Chaucer, who is supposed to have been in Italy, says that it stood "a littel out" of Pisa; Villani says, in the Piazza of the Anziani. It is understood to be no longer in existence, and even its site is disputed.

It is curious to feel oneself sitting quietly in one of the old Italian houses, and to think of all the passions that have agitated the hearts of so many generations of its tenants; all the revels and the quarrels that have echoed along its wall; all the guitars that have tinkled under its windows: all the scuffles that have disputed its doors. Along the great halls, how many feet have hurried in alarm! how many stately beauties have drawn their trains! how many torches have ushered magnificence up the staircases! how much blood perhaps been shed! The ground floors of all the great houses in Pisa, as in other Italian cities, have iron bars at the windows. They were for security in time of trouble. The look is at first very gloomy and prison-like, but you get used to it. The bars are round, and painted white, and the interstices are large; and if the windows look towards a garden, and are bordered with shrubs and ivy, as those at the back

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were in the Casa Lanfranchi, the imagination makes a compromise with their prison-like appearance, and persuades itself they are but comforts in times of war, and trellises during a peace establishment. All the floors are made for separate families, it having been the custom in Italy from time immemorial for fathers and mothers, sons and daughters-in-law, or *vice versa*, with as many other relations as might be "agreeable," to live under the same roof. Spaciousness and utility were the great objects with the builder; and a stranger is sometimes surprised with the look of the finest houses outside, particularly the arrangement of the ground-floor. The stables used often to be there, and their place is now as often occupied by shops. In the inside of the great private houses there is always a certain majestic amplitude; but the entrances of the rooms, and the staircase on the ground floor, are often placed irregularly, so as to sacrifice everything to convenience. In the details there is sure to be a noble eye to proportion. You cannot look at the elevation of the commonest doorway, or the ceiling of a room appropriated to the humblest purposes, but you recognize the land of the fine arts. You think Michael Angelo has been at the turning of those arches — at the harmonizing of those beautiful varieties of shade, which, by the secret principles common to all arts and sciences, affect the mind like a sort of inaudible music. The very plasterer who is hired to give the bare walls of some old disused apartment an appearance of ornament, paints his door-ways, his pilasters, and his borders of leaves, in a bold style of relief and illusion, which would astonish the doubtful hand of many an English student "in the higher walks of art." It must be observed, however, that this is a piece of good taste which seems to have survived most others, and to have been kept up by the objects on which it works; for the arts are at present lying fallow in Italy, waiting for better times.

I was so taken up, on my arrival at Pisa, with friends and their better novelties, that I forgot even to look

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about me for the Leaning Tower. You lose sight of it on entering the town, unless you come in at the Lucca gate. On the Sunday following, however, I went to see it, and the spot where it stands, in illustrious company. Forsyth,<sup>1</sup> a late traveller of much shrewdness and pith (though a want of ear, and an affectation of ultra good sense, rendered him in some respects extremely unfit for a critic on Italy—as when he puts music and perfumery on a level!), had been beforehand with the spot in putting this idea in my head. “Pisa,” says he, “while the capital of a republic, was celebrated for its profusion of marble, its patrician towers, and its grave magnificence. It still can boast some marble churches, a marble palace, and a marble bridge. Its towers, though no longer a mark of nobility, may be traced in the walls of modernized houses. Its gravity pervades every street; but its magnificence is now confined to one sacred corner. There stand the Cathedral, the Baptistery, the Leaning Tower, and the Campo Santo; all built of the same marble, all varieties of the same architecture, all venerable with years, and fortunate both in their society and in their solitude.”

I know not whether my first sensation at the sight of the Leaning Tower, was admiration of its extreme beauty, or astonishment at its posture. Its beauty has never been sufficiently praised. Its overhanging seems to menace the houses beneath it with destruction. The inclination is fourteen feet out of the perpendicular. We are amazed that people should build houses underneath it, till we recollect that it has probably stood thus ever since it was built, that is to say, for nearly six hundred and fifty years; and that habit reconciles us to anything. Something of a curve backwards is given to it. The structure was begun by a German artist, William of Inspruck, and finished by Italians. Several other towers in Pisa, including the observatory, have a manifest inclination, owing to the

[<sup>1</sup> Joseph Forsyth (1763–1815), the author of *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts and Letters, during an Excursion in Italy in the years 1802 and 1803*, published in 1813.]



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same cause,—the sinking of the soil, which is light, sandy, and full of springs.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the company in which it stands, let the reader imagine a broad grass-walk, standing in the solitary part of a country town. Let him suppose at one end of this walk the Leaning Tower, with a row of small but elegant houses right under the inclination, and looking down the grass-plot; the Baptistery, a rotunda, standing by itself at the opposite end; the public hospital, an extremely neat and quiet building, occupying the principal length of the road which borders the grass-plot on one side; on the other side, and on the grass itself, the cathedral, stretching between the Leaning Tower and the Baptistery; and lastly, at the back of the cathedral, and visible between the openings at its two ends, the Campo Santo (Holy Field) or burial-ground, walled in with marble cloisters full of the oldest paintings in Italy. All these buildings are detached; they all stand in a free, open situation; they all look as if they were built but a year ago; they are all of marble; the whole place is kept extremely clean,—the very grass in a state of greenness not common to turf in the south; and there are trees looking upon it over a wall next the Baptistery. Let the reader add to this scene a few boys playing about, all ready to answer your questions in pure Tuscan,—women occasionally passing with veils or bare heads, or now and then a couple of friars; and though finer individual sights may be found in the world, it will be difficult to come upon an assemblage of objects more rich in their combination.

The Baptistery is a large rotunda, richly carved, and appropriated solely to the purpose after which it was christened. It is in a mixed style, and was built in the

<sup>1</sup> Upon reflection, since the appearance of the first edition of this book, I cannot help thinking, after all, that the inclination of this famous tower so much out of the perpendicular, must have taken place long after it was completed; that it was left standing as it does, after long and anxious watching for the consequences; and that anything which architecture may have done by way of counteraction, could only have ensued upon experience of the tower's safety.

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twelfth century. Forsyth, who is deep in arches and polygons, objects to the crowd of unnecessary columns; to the "hideous tunnel which conceals the fine swell of the cupola;" and to the appropriation of so large an edifice to a christening. The "tunnel" may deserve his "wrath;" but his architectural learning sometimes behaves as ill as the tunnel. It obscures his better taste. A christening, in the eyes of a good Catholic, is at least as important an object as a rotunda; and there is a religious sentiment in the profusion with which ornament is heaped upon edifices of this nature. It forms a beauty of itself, and gives even mediocrity a sort of abundance of intention that looks like the wealth of genius. The materials take leave of their materiality, and crowd together into a worship of their own. It is no longer "let everything" only "that has *breath* praise the Lord;" but let everything else praise him, and take a meaning and life accordingly. Let column obscure column, as in a multitude of men; let arch strain upon arch, as if to ascend to heaven; let there be infinite details, conglomerations, mysteries, lights, darknesses; and let the birth of a new soul be celebrated in the midst of all.

The cathedral is in the Greek style of the middle ages, a style which this writer thinks should rather be called the Lombard, "as it appeared in Italy first under the Lombard princes." He says, that it includes "whatever was grand or beautiful in the works of the middle ages;" and that "this was perhaps the noblest of them all." He proceeds to find fault with certain incongruities, amongst which are some remains of Pagan sculpture left standing in a Christian church; but he enthusiastically admires the pillars of oriental granite that support the roof. The outside of the building consists of mere heaps of marble, mounting by huge steps to the roof; but their simplicity as well as size gives them a new sort of grandeur; and Mr. Forsyth has overlooked the extraordinary sculpture of the bronze doors, worthy of the same hand that made those others at Florence, which Michael Angelo said were fit to be the gates of Paradise. It is divided into

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compartments, the subjects of which are taken from Scripture. The relief is the most graceful and masterly conceivable; the perspective astonishing, as if in drawing; and equal justice is done to the sharp monstrosities of the devil with his bat-wings, and to the gentle graces of Jesus. There is a great number of pictures in the cathedral, good enough to assist rather than spoil the effect, but not remarkable. I never was present when the church-service was at its best; but the leader did not seem to rely much on his singers, by the noise which he made in beating time. His vehement roll of paper sounded like the lashing of a whip.

One evening, in August, I saw the whole inside of the cathedral lit up with wax in honour of the Assumption. The lights were disposed with much taste, but produced a great heat. There was a gigantic picture of the Virgin displayed at the upper end, who was to be supposed sitting in heaven, surrounded with the celestial ardours; but she was "dark with excess of bright."<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to see this profusion of lights, especially when one knows their symbolical meaning, without being struck with the source from which Dante took his idea of the beatified spirits. His heaven, filled with lights, and lights too, arranged in figures, which glow with lustre in proportion to the beatitude of the souls within them, is the sublimation of a Catholic church. And so far it is heavenly indeed, for nothing escapes the look of materiality like fire. It is so airy, joyous, and divine a thing, when separated from the idea of pain and an ill purpose, that the language of happiness naturally adopts its terms, and can tell of nothing more rapturous than burning bosoms and sparkling eyes. The Seraph of the Hebrew theology was a fire. But then the materials of heaven and hell are the same? Yes; and a very fine piece of moral theology might be made out of their sameness, always omitting the brute injustice of eternal punishment. Is it not by our greater or less cultivation of health and benevolence, that we all make out our hells and heavens

[<sup>1</sup> "Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear."  
*Paradise Lost*, Book 3, line 380.]

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upon earth? by a turning of the same materials and passions of which we are all composed to different accounts; burning now in the horrors of hell with fear, hatred, and uncharitableness, and now in the joys, or at least the happiest sympathies of heaven, with good effort and courage, with gratitude, generosity, and love?

The crowning glory of Pisa is the Campo Santo. I entered for the first time at twilight, when the indistinct shapes, colours, and antiquity of the old paintings wonderfully harmonized with the nature of the place. I chose to go towards evening, when I saw it again; and though the sunset came upon me too fast to allow me to see all the pictures as minutely as I could have wished, I saw enough to warrant my giving an opinion of them; and I again had the pleasure of standing in the spot at twilight. It is an oblong enclosure, about the size of Stratford Place, and surrounded with cloisters wider and lighter than those of Westminster. At least, such was my impression. The middle is grassed earth, the surface of which, for some depth, is said to have been brought from Palestine at the time of the crusades, and to possess the virtue of decomposing bodies in the course of a few hours. The tradition is, that Ubaldo Lanfranchi, Archbishop of Pisa, who commanded the forces contributed by his countrymen, brought the earth away with him in his ships; but though such a proceeding would not have been impossible, the story is now, I believe, regarded as a mere legend. The decomposition of the bodies might have been effected by other means. Persons are buried both in this enclosure and in the cloisters, but only persons of rank or celebrity. Most of the inscriptions for instance (of which there are some hundreds, all on marble, and mixed with busts and figures), are to the memory of Pisans in the rank of nobility; but there are several also to artists and men of letters. The most interesting grave is that of Benozzo, one of the old painters, who lies at the feet of his works.

The paintings on the walls, the great glory of Pisa, are by Orgagna, Simon Memmi, Giotto, Buffalmacco,



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Benozzo, and others—all more or less renowned by illustrious pens ; all, with more or less gusto, the true and reverend harbingers of the greatest painters of Italy. Simon Memmi is the artist celebrated by Petrarch for his portrait of Laura ; Buffalmacco is the mad wag (grave enough here) who cuts such a figure in the old Italian novels ; and Giotto, the greatest of them all, is the friend of Dante, the hander down of his likeness to posterity, and himself the Dante of his art, without the drawbacks of satire and sorrow. His works have the same real character, the imaginative mixture of things familiar with things unearthly, the same strenuous and (when they choose) gentle expression,—in short, the same true discernment of the “differences of things,” now grappling with a fiend or a fierce thought, now sympathising with fear and sorrow, now setting hard the teeth of grim warriors, now dissolving in the looks and flowing tresses of women, or putting a young gallant in an attitude to which Raphael might have traced his cavaliers. And this is more or less the character of the very oldest pictures in the Campo Santo. They have the germs of beauty and greatness, however obscured and stiffened ; the struggle of true pictorial feeling with the inexperience of art. As you proceed along the walls, you see gracefulness and knowledge gradually helping one another, and legs and arms, lights, shades, and details of all sorts taking their proper measures and positions, as if every separate thing in the world of painting had been created with repeated efforts, till it answered the fair idea. They are like a dream of humanity during the twilight of creation.

I have already mentioned that the pictures are painted on the walls of the four cloisters. They occupy the greater part of the elevation of these walls, beginning at top and finishing at a reasonable distance from the pavement. The subjects are from the Old Testament up to the time of Solomon, from the legends of the middle ages, particularly St. Ranieri (the patron saint of Pisa) and from the history of the Crucifixion, Resurrection, etc., with the Day of Judgment. There

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is also a Triumph of Death. The colours of some of them, especially of the sky and ship in the voyage of St. Ranieri, are wonderfully preserved. The sky looks as blue as the finest out of doors. But others are much injured by the sea air, which blows into Pisa; and it is a pity that the windows of the cloisters in these quarters are not glazed, to protect them from further injury. The best idea, perhaps, which I can give an Englishman of the general character of the paintings, is by referring him to the engravings of Albert Dürer, and the serious parts of Chaucer. There is the same want of proper costume—the same intense feeling of the human being, both in body and soul—the same bookish, romantic, and retired character—the same evidences, in short, of antiquity and commencement, weak (where it is weak) for want of a settled art and language, but strong for that very reason in first impulses, and in putting down all that is felt. An old poet, however, always has the advantage of an old painter, because he is not bound to a visible exhibition of arms, legs, and attitudes, and thus escapes the artistical defects of the time. But they truly illustrate one another. Chaucer's Duke Theseus, clothed and behaving accordingly—his yawning courtiers, who thank King Cambuscan for dismissing them to bed—his god Janus keeping Christmas with his fireside and his dish of brawn, etc.—exhibit the same fantastic mixtures of violated costume and truth of nature. The way in which the great old poet mingles together personages of all times, nations, and religions, real and fictitious, Samson and Turnus with Socrates, Ovid with St. Augustin, etc., and his descriptions of actual "pur-treyings on a wall," in which are exhibited, in one and the same scene, Narcissus, Solomon, Venus, Croesus, and "the porter Idleness," resemble the manner in which some of the painters in the Campo Santo defy all perspective, and fill one picture with twenty different solitudes. There is a painting, for instance, devoted to the celebrated anchorites, or hermits of the desert. They are represented according to their several legends—reading, dying, undergoing temptations, assisted by

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lions, etc. At first they all look like fantastic actors in the same piece ; but you dream, and are reconciled.

The contempt of everything like interval, and of all which may have happened in it, makes the ordinary events of life seem of as little moment ; and the mind is exclusively occupied with the sacred old men and their solitudes, all at the same time, and yet each by himself. The manner in which some of the hoary saints in these pictures pore over their books, and carry their decrepit old age, full of a bent and absorbed feebleness—the set limbs of the warriors on horseback—the sidelong unequivocal looks of some of the ladies playing on harps, and conscious of their ornaments—the people of fashion, seated in rows, with Time coming up unawares to destroy them—the other rows of elders and doctors of the church, forming part of the array of heaven—the uplifted hand of Christ denouncing the wicked at the Day of Judgment—the daring satires occasionally introduced against monks and nuns—the profusion of attitudes, expressions, incidents, broad draperies, ornaments of all sorts, visions, mountains, ghastly-looking cities, fiends, angels, sibylline old women, dancers, virgin brides, mothers and children, princes, patriarchs, dying saints ;—it would be a simply blind injustice to the superabundance and truth of conception in all this multitude of imagery not to recognize the real inspirers as well as harbingers of Raphael and Michael Angelo, instead of confining the honour to the Masaccios and Peruginos. The Masaccios and Peruginos, for all that ever I saw, meritorious as they are, are no more to be compared with them than the sonneteers of Henry the Eighth's time are to be compared with Chaucer. Even in the very rudest of the pictures, where the souls of the dying are going out of their mouths in the shape of little children, there are passages not unworthy of Dante or Michael Angelo—angels trembling at the blowing of trumpets ; men in vain attempting to carry their friends into heaven ; and saints who have lived ages of temperance, sitting in calm air upon hills far above the progress of Death, who goes bearing down the great, the luxurious, and the young. The picture

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by Titian (or Giorgione), in which he has represented the three great stages of existence, bubble-blowing childhood, love-making manhood, and death-contemplating old age, is not better conceived, and hardly better made out, than some of the designs of Orgagna and Giotto.

Since I have beheld the Campo Santo I have enriched my day-dreams and my stock of the admirable, and am thankful that I have names by heart to which I owe homage and gratitude. Giotto, be thou one to me hereafter, of a kindred brevity, solidity, and stateliness, with that of thy friend Dante, and far happier! Tender and noble Orgagna, be thou blessed for ever beyond the happiness of thine own heaven!

The air of Pisa is soft and balmy to the last degree. A look out upon the Lung' Arno at noon is curious. A blue sky is overhead—dazzling stone underneath—the yellow Arno gliding along, generally with nothing upon it, sometimes a lazy sail; the houses on the opposite side with their green blinds down appear to be asleep; and nobody passes but a few labourers, carmen, or countrywomen in their veils and handkerchiefs, hastening with bare feet, but never too fast to lose a certain air of strut and stateliness. Dante, in one of his love poems praises his mistress for walking like a peacock; nay, even like a crane, *straight above herself*:—

“Soave a guisa va di un bel pavone,  
Diritta sopra se, coma una grua.”<sup>1</sup>

Sweetly she goes, like the bright peacock; straight  
Above herself, like to the lady crane.

This is the common walk of Italian woman, rich and poor. To an English eye, at first it seems wanting in a certain modesty and moral grace; but you see what the grave poet thinks of it, and it is not associated in an Italian mind with any such deficiency. That it has a beauty of its own is certain.

Solitary as Pisa may look at noon, it is only by comparison with what you find in very populous cities. Its desolate aspect is much exaggerated. The people,

[<sup>1</sup> Canzone xix. beginning: “Io miro i crespi e gli biondi capegli.”]



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for the most part, sit in shade at their doors in the hottest weather, so that it cannot look so solitary as many parts of London at the same time of the year; and though it is true that grass grows in some of the streets, it is only in the remotest. The streets, for the most part, are kept very neat and clean, not excepting the poorest alleys; a benefit arising not only from the fine pavement which is everywhere to be found, but from the wise use to which criminals are put. The punishment of death is not kept up in Tuscany. Robbers, and even murderers, are made to atone for the ill they have done by the good works of sweeping and keeping clean. A great murderer on the English stage used formerly to be dressed in a suit of brick-dust. In Tuscany, or at least in Pisa, robbers condemned to this punishment are clothed in a red livery, and murderers in a yellow. A stranger looks with a feeling more grave than curiosity at these saffron-coloured anomalies quietly doing their duty in the streets, and not seeming to avoid observation. But, in fact, they look just like other men. They are either too healthy by temperance and exercise to exhibit a conscience, or think they make up by their labour for so trifling an ebullition of animal spirits. And they have a good deal to say for themselves, considering that circumstances modify all men, and that the labour is in chains and for life.

The inhabitants of Pisa, in general, are not reckoned a favourable specimen of Tuscan looks. You are sure to meet fine faces in any large assembly, but the common run is bad enough. They are hard, prematurely aged, and what expression there is, is worldly. Some of them have no expression whatever, but are as destitute of speculation and feeling as masks. The bad Italian face and the good Italian face are the extremes of insensibility and the reverse. But it is rare that the eyes are not fine; and the females have a profusion of good hair. Lady Morgan has remarked the promising countenances of Italian children, compared with what they turn out to be as they grow older; and she adds, with equal justice, that it is an evident affair

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of government and education. You doubly pity the corruptions of a people who, besides their natural genius, preserve in the very midst of their sophistication a frankness distinct from it, and an entire freedom from affectation. An Italian annoys you neither with his pride like an Englishman, nor with his vanity like a Frenchman. He is quiet and natural, self-possessed without wrapping himself up in a corner, and ready for cheerfulness without grimace. His frankness sometimes takes the air of a simplicity, at once misplaced and touching. A young man, who exhibited a taste for all good and generous sentiments, and who, according to the representation of his friends, was a very worthy as well as ingenious person, did not scruple to tell me one day, as a matter of course, that he made a point of getting acquainted with rich families, purely to be invited to their houses and partake of their good things. Many an Englishman would do this, but he would hardly be so frank about it, especially to a stranger; nor would an Englishman of the same tastes in other respects be easily found to act so. But it is the old story of "following the multitude to do evil," and is no doubt accounted a matter of necessity and common sense.

There seems a good deal of talent for music among the Pisans, which does not know how to make its way. You never hear the poorest melody, but somebody strikes in with what he can muster up of a harmony. Boys go about of an evening, and parties sit at their doors, singing popular airs, and hanging as long as possible on the last chord. It is not an uncommon thing for gentlemen to play their guitars as they go along to a party. I heard one evening a voice singing past a window, that would not have disgraced an opera; and I once walked behind a common post-boy, who, in default of having another to help him to a harmony, contrived to make chords of all his notes, by rapidly sounding the second and the treble, one after the other. The whole people are bitten with a new song, and hardly sing anything else till the next. There were two epidemic airs of this kind when I was

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there, which had been imported from Florence, and which the inhabitants sang from morning till night, though they were nothing remarkable. Yet Pisa is said to be the least fond of music of any city in Tuscany.

Pisa is a tranquil, an imposing, and even now a beautiful and stately city. It looks like what it is, the residence of an university: many parts of it seem made up of colleges; and we feel as if we ought to "walk gowned." It possesses the Campo Santo; its river is the river of Tuscany poetry, and furnished Michael Angelo with the subject of his cartoon; and it disputes with Florence the birth of Galileo. Here, at all events, the great astronomer studied and taught: here his mind was born, and another great impulse given to the progress of philosophy and liberal opinion.

### CHAPTER XX

#### GENOA

[SEPTEMBER, 1822, TO JULY, 1823.]

TOWARDS the end of September, Lord Byron and myself, in different parties, left Pisa for Genoa. Tuscany had been rendered uncomfortable to him by the misadventures both there and at Leghorn; and at Genoa he would hover on the borders of his inclination for Greece. Perhaps he had already made arrangements for going thither.

On our way to Genoa we met at Lerici. He had an illness at that place; and all my melancholy was put to its height by seeing the spot which my departed friend had lived in, and his solitary mansion on the seashore. Lerici is wild and retired, with a bay and rocky eminences; the people suited to it, something between inhabitants of sea and land. In the summer time they will be up all night dabbling in the water and making wild noises. Here Trelawny joined us. He took me to the Villa Magni (the house just alluded to); and we

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paced over its empty rooms and neglected garden. The sea fawned upon the shore, as though it could do no harm.

At Lerici we had an earthquake. The shock was the smartest we experienced in Italy. At Pisa there had been a dull intimation of one, such as happens in that city about once in three years. In the neighbourhood of Florence we had another, less dull, but lasting only for an instant. It was exactly as if somebody with a strong hand had jerked a pole up against the ceiling of the lower room right under one's feet. This was at Maiano, among the Fiesolan hills. People came out of their rooms, and inquired of one another what was the matter. At Lerici I awoke at dawn with an extraordinary sensation, and directly afterwards the earthquake took place. It was strong enough to shake the pictures on the wall; and it lasted a sufficient time to resemble the rolling of a waggon under an archway, which it did both in noise and movement. I got up and went to the window. The people were already collecting in the open place beneath it; and I heard, in the clear morning air, the word *Terremoto* (earthquake) repeated from one to another. The sensation for the next ten minutes or so was very distressing. You expected the shock to come again, and to be worse. However, we had no more of it. We congratulated ourselves the more, because there was a tower on a rock just above our heads, which would have stood upon no ceremony with our inn. They told us, if I remember, that they had an earthquake on this part of the coast of Italy about once every five years. Italy is a land of volcanoes, more or less subdued. It is a great grapery, built over a flue. If the earthquake did not come, it was thought the crops were not so good.

From Lerici we proceeded part of our way by water, as far as Sestri. Lord Byron went in a private boat; Trelawny in another; myself and family in a felucca. It was pretty to see the boats with their white sails, gliding by the rocks over that blue sea. A little breeze coming on, our seamen were afraid, and put into



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Porto Venere, a deserted town a short distance from Lerici.

After resting a few hours, we put forth again, and had a lazy, sunny passage to Sestri, where a crowd of people assailed us, like savages at an island, for our patronage and portmanteaux. They were robust, clamorous, fishy fellows, like so many children of the Tritons in Raphael's pictures; as if those plebeian gods of the sea had been making love to Italian chambermaids. Italian goddesses have shown a taste not unsimilar, and more condescending; and English ones, too, in Italy, if scandal is to be believed. But Naples is the headquarters of this overgrowth of wild luxury. Marino, a Neapolitan, may have had it in his eye when he wrote that fine sonnet of his, full of gusto, brawny and bearded, about Triton pursuing Cymothoe. (See *Parnaso Italiano*, tom. 41, p. 10.)

From Sestri we proceeded over the maritime part of the Apennines to Genoa. Their character is of the least interesting sort of any mountains, being neither distinct nor wooded; but undulating, barren, and coarse; without any grandeur but what arises from an excess of that appearance. They lie in a succession of great doughy billows, like so much enormous pudding, or petrified mud.

Genoa again!—With what different feelings we beheld it from those which enchanted us the first time! Mrs. Shelley, who preceded us, had found houses both for Lord Byron's family and my own at Albaro, a neighbouring village on a hill. We were to live in the same house with her; and in the Casa Negrotto we accordingly found an English welcome. There were forty rooms in it, some of them such as would be considered splendid in England, and all neat and new, with borders and arabesques. The balcony and staircase were of marble; and there was a little flower-garden. The rent of this house was twenty pounds a year. Lord Byron paid four-and-twenty for his, which was older and more imposing, and a good piece of ground. It was called the Casa Saluzzi.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lan-

<sup>1</sup> Are the Saluzzi family from Chaucer's *Country of Saluces*,

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dor<sup>1</sup> and his family had occupied a house in the same village—the Casa Pallavicini. He has recorded an interesting dialogue that took place in it.<sup>2</sup> Of Albaro, and the city itself, I shall speak more at large in the course of the chapter.

The Genoese post brought us the first number of our new quarterly, the *Liberal*, accompanied both with hopes and fears, the latter of which were too speedily realized. Living now in a separate house from Lord Byron, I saw less of him than before; and, under all the circumstances, it was as well: for though we had always been on what are called “good terms,” the cordiality did not increase. His friends in England, who, after what had lately taken place there in his instance, were opposed, naturally enough, to his opening new fields of publicity, did what they could to prevent his taking a hearty interest in the *Liberal*; and I must confess that I did not mend the matter by my own inability to fall in cordially with his ways, and by a certain jealousy of my position, which prevented me, neither very wisely nor justly, from manifesting the admiration due to his genius, and reading the manuscripts he showed me with a becoming amount of thanks and good words. I think he had a right to feel this want of accord in a companion, whatever might be its value. A dozen years later, reflection would have made me act very differently. At the same time, though the *Liberal* had no mean success, he unquestionably looked to its having a far greater; and the result of all these combined circumstances was, that the interest he took in it cooled in proportion as it should have grown warm, and after four numbers it ceased. They were all published during our residence in this part of Italy. Lord Byron contributed some poems,

whose “Markis” married the patient Griselda? Saluces was in the maritime Apennines, by Piedmont, and might have originated a family of Genoese nobles. Classical and romantic associations meet us in such abundance at every turn in Italy, that upon the least hint a book speaketh.

[<sup>1</sup> Walter Savage Landor (1770–1864), was living in this house in 1818, but he was in Florence, at the time of Hunt’s visit to Italy.]

<sup>2</sup> *Imaginary Conversations*, vol. i. p. 179, second edition.

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to which his customary publisher had objected on account of their fault-finding in Church and State, and their critical attacks on acquaintances. Among them was the *Vision of Judgment*, the best satire since the days of Pope. Churchill's satires, compared with it, are bludgeons compared with steel of Damascus. Hazlitt<sup>1</sup> contributed some of the most entertaining of his vigorous essays; and Shelley had left us his masterly translation of the *May-Day Night* in *Faust*. As to myself, if I may speak of my own articles after these, I wrote by far the greater number,—perhaps nearly half the publication; but I was ill; and with the exception of one or two, I hope they were not among my best. This, however, did not hinder great puzzlement among the critics of that day. I say it with not the slightest intention of self-compliment; and I should think him a very dull fellow who supposed it.

Puzzlement and posement of various sorts awaited many readers of the *Liberal*. A periodical work which is understood to be written by known authors, whose names are, nevertheless, unaffixed to their contributions, has the disadvantage of hazarding uneasiness to the minds of such readers as pique themselves on knowing a man's style without really being sure of it. They long to assign the articles to this and that author, but they fear to be mistaken. The perplexity irritates them; they are forced to wait the judgments of others; and they willingly comfort the wound given to their self-love by siding with such as are unfavourable, and pronouncing the articles to be of an undistinguishable mediocrity. I do not know how far this kind of dilemma may have injured the *Liberal*. I suspect it had no little effect. But what must have exasperated, while it consoled it, critics of an opposite kind were sometimes as much in the wrong as the former were afraid of being. A signal instance occurred in the case of a writer not disesteemed in his day, whose name I suppress, because the mention of it might disconcert

[<sup>1</sup> William Hazlitt contributed to No. 2, *On the Spirit of Monarchy*; No. 3, *My First Acquaintance with the Poets*; No. 4, *Pulpit Oratory—Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Irving.*]

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some relation. One of the poems in the *Liberal* is entitled the *Book of Beginnings*.<sup>1</sup> Its subject is poetical exordiums. The writer in question attributed it to Lord Byron; and after denouncing the "atheists and scoffers," by whom, he said, his lordship had been "led into defiance of the sacred writings," thus proceeded to notice a religious passage from Dryden, which was quoted with admiration in the notes to the poem:—

"In vain was Lord Byron led into the defiance of the sacred writings; there are passages in his letters and in his works which show that religion might have been in his soul. Could he recite the following lines and resist the force of them? It is true that he marks them for the beauty of the verse, but no less for the sublimity of the conception; and I cannot but hope that, had he lived, he would have proved another instance of genius bowing to the power of truth."

Now the poem in question, and the notes to it, were written by myself, one of those "atheists and scoffers" (according to this gentleman), by whom the supposed writer of the poem had been "led into defiance of the sacred writings."

This person knew as little of my religion as he knew of an author's manner. Among these same notes of mine is the following passage:—

"What divine plays would not Beaumont and Fletcher have left us, if they had not been fine gentlemen about town, and ambitious to please a perishing generation! Their muse is like an accomplished country beauty, of the most exquisite kind, seduced up to town, and made familiar with the most devilish parts of it, yet retaining, through all her debauchery, a sweet regret and an adoring fondness for nature. She has lilies about her paint and patch-boxes, and loves them almost as much as when she was a child."

I do not think that the author of *Don Juan* was accustomed to make critical reflections of that sort. I do not allude, of course, to the writing, but to the sentiment. But the poem was written in the stanza of *Don Juan*, and, therefore, his Lordship was to be complimented with the religion of it, at the expense of his *Juanity*.

I will take this opportunity of recording some more

[<sup>1</sup> In the third number (vol ii. p. 97).]



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anecdotes as they occur to me. My neighbour and myself used to walk in the grounds of the Casa Saluzzi; talking for the most part of indifferent things, and endeavouring to joke away the consciousness of our position. We joked even upon our differences of opinion. It was a jest between us, that the only book that was a thorough favourite on both sides, was Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. I used to talk of Johnson when I saw him disturbed, or when I wished to avoid other subjects. He asked me one day how I should have felt in Johnson's company. I said it was difficult to judge; because, living in other times, and one's character being modified by them, I could not help thinking of myself as I was now, and Johnson as he was in times previous: so that it appeared to me that I should have been somewhat "Jacobinical" in his company, and not disposed to put up with his *ipse dixits*. He said that "Johnson would have awed him, he treated lords with so much respect." The reader, after what I have lately said, will see what was at the bottom of these remarks on both sides. Had the question been asked me now, I should have said, that I loved Johnson, and hope I should have shown him all due homage; though I think I should have been inclined sometimes to contest his conclusions more than they are contested by his interlocutors in Boswell. Lord Byron liked to imitate Johnson, and say, "Why, sir," in a high mouthing way, rising, and looking about him. His imitation was very pleasant.

It is a credit to my noble friend, that he was by far the pleasantest when he had got a little wine in his head. The only time I invited myself to dine with him, I told him I did it on that account, and that I meant to push the bottle so that he should intoxicate me with his good company. He said he would have a set-to; but he never did. It was a little before he left Italy; and there was a point in contest between us (not regarding myself) which he thought perhaps I should persuade him to give up. When in his cups, which was not often nor immoderately, he was inclined to be tender; but not weakly so, nor lachrymose. I know not

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how it might have been with everybody, but he paid me the compliment of being excited to his very best feelings; and when I rose late to go away, he would hold me down, and say with a look of entreaty, "Not yet." Then it was that I seemed to talk with the proper natural Byron as he ought to have been; and I used to think there was not a sacrifice which I could not have made to keep him in that temper, and see his friends love him as much as the world admired. But I ought to have made the sacrifice at once. I should have broken the ice between us which had been generated on points of literary predilection; and admired, and shown that I admired, as I ought to have done, his admirable genius. It was not only an oversight in me; it was a want of friendship. Friendship ought to have made me discover, what less cordial feelings had kept me blind to. Next morning the happy moment had gone, and nothing remained but to despair and joke.

In his wine he would volunteer an imitation of somebody, generally of Incledon. He was not a good mimic in the detail, but he could give a lively broad sketch; and over his cups his imitations were good-natured, which was not always the case at other times. His Incledon was vocal. I made pretensions to the oratorical part; and between us we boasted that we made up the entire phenomenon. He would sometimes, however, give a happy comprehensive idea of a person's manner and turn of mind by the utterance of a single phrase, or even word. Thus he would pleasantly pretend that Braham called "enthusiasm" *entoozymoozy*; and in the extraordinary combination of lightness, haste, indifference, and fervour with which he would pitch out that single word from his lips, accompanied with a gesture to correspond, he would really set before you the admirable singer in one of his (then) characteristic passages of stage dialogue. He did not live to see Braham become an exception in his dialogue as in his singing.

Lord Byron left Italy for Greece,<sup>1</sup> and our conversa-

<sup>1</sup> [Lord Byron sailed from Leghorn on the 24th July, 1823.]

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tion was at an end. I will, therefore, request the reader's company in a walk with me about Genoa.

Genoa is truly "Genoa the Superb." Its finest aspect is from the sea, and from the sea I first beheld it. Imagine a glorious amphitheatre of white houses, with mountains on each side and at the back. The base is composed of the city with its churches and shipping; the other houses are country seats, looking out, one above the other, up the hill. To the left are the Alps with their snowy tops: to the right, and for the back, are the Apennines. This is Genoa. It is situate at the very angle of the pointed gulf, which is called after its name, and which presents on either side, as you sail up it, white villages, country seats, and olive groves.

When we first saw Genoa, which was the first Italian city we beheld, our notions of the Italian countenance were formidably startled by the pilot-boat, which came out to offer its assistance in conducting us by the mole. The mole had been injured greatly by the storms of the preceding winter. The boat contained, I thought, as ugly a set of faces as could well have been brought together. It was a very neat boat, and the pilots were singularly neat and clean in their persons; but their faces! My wife looked at me as much as to say, "Are these our fine southern heads?" The children looked at me: we all looked at one another: and what was very inhospitable, the pilots all looked at us. The sun was in their eyes; and there they sat on their oars, grinning up at us, and bargaining with the captain. The older ones were like monkeys; the younger like half-withered masks—hard, stony, and pale.

The first sight of Italian women disappointed us almost as much as Italian men, because we expected still more of them. Of course, had we seen them first, they would have disappointed us more. But I afterwards found, that as you ascended among the more educated classes, the faces improved; and I have reason to believe, that most of the women whom we saw in boats, deceived us as to their rank in this respect. In Italy, gentlemen do not look so much like gentlemen as in England, but there are greater numbers of women who

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look like ladies. This is partly owing to their dress. In Genoa particularly, the out-of-door head-dress for women of all ranks is a white veil; and an Englishman, unaccustomed to see this piece of drapery upon common heads, and observing, besides, the stateliness with which female Italians carry themselves, thinks he is oftener looking at gentlewomen than he is.

We had not been long in harbour before we inquired, with all the eagerness of voyagers, for our fresh provisions. In Italy, we also looked for our fresh heaps of fruit; and we had them—in all the luxury of baskets and vine-leaves, and a cheapness that made us laugh. Grapes were not in season; but there were figs, apricots, fresh almonds, oranges, pears, and gigantic cherries, as fine as they were large. We also took leave of our biscuits for excellent bread; and had milk brought to us in bottles, which were stopped with vine-leaves. The mutton turned out to be kid, and lean enough; but it was a novelty, and we ate it upon a principle of inquiry. An excellent light wine accompanied our repast, drunk, not in little cautious glasses, like our “hot intoxicating liquor,” but out of tumblers. It was just threepence English a quart. It had, notwithstanding its lightness, a real vinous body and both looked and tasted like a sort of claret; but we were sorry to find it was French, and not Italian. As to the fruit,—to give a specimen in one word,—the apricots, very fine ones, were two-pence a gallon.

The quay of Genoa is a handsome one, profuse of good pavement, gate, etc.; and the abundance of stone everywhere, the whiteness of the houses, and the blueness of the sky, cast, at first sight, an extraordinary look of lightness and cleanliness upon everything. Nor are you disappointed in Genoa, as people are at Lisbon, between the fairness of the look outside and the dirt within. The large wrinkled features of the old women, with their uncapped grey hair, strike you at first as singularly plain: so do the people in general; but everything looks clean and neat, and full of the smart bustle of a commercial city. What surprises you is the narrowness of the streets. As soon as you have



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passed the gate, you think you have entered upon a lane, remarkably good indeed for a lane,—a sort of Bond Street of an alley,—but you have no suspicion that it is a street, and of the ordinary dimensions. The shops also, though neat, are entirely open, like English potato shops, or at best like some of the little comb shops now rarely to be seen in London. I mean, they have no windows, or such walls as would hold them. After entering this street, you soon come upon the public place, or exchange, which is a very fair one. You cross over this into the principal street, or street of goldsmiths, full of shops in which trinkets are sold, including a world of crosses and other Christian emblems, and huge ear-rings. It is the custom in several parts of Italy for girls to carry their marriage portion about with them, in the shape of gold ear-rings and crosses; and no maid-servant thinks herself properly dressed on mass-days without announcing, in this way, that she is equally fit for heaven and a husband. The gold is very thin, but solidity is made up for by the length and width of the ornaments; and the ear-rings are often heavy enough to tear through the lobes of the ears. Imagine a brown, black-eyed girl, with her thick hair done up in combs, a white veil over it, a coloured, sometimes a white gown, large dangling gold ornaments at her ears and bosom, and perhaps bare feet or tattered shoes, and you have the complete portrait of a Genoese maid-servant or peasant girl, issuing forth to church or to a dance. The men of all classes dress more like the same classes in other countries, with an exception, however, as before noticed, in favour of the humbler ones. Yet you often see the Genoese cap, and you notice a set of porters from Bergamo, who wear a puckered kilt. They are a good-looking race, and are esteemed for their honesty. The burdens they carry are enormous. The labourer of Italy often shows his propensity to a piece of drapery, by hanging his jacket over his shoulders with the sleeves dangling; a custom naturally prompted by the heat.

In England we have delicate names for some of our streets and alleys. There is Love Lane, Maiden Lane,

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Garden Court, Green Arbour Court, etc., but in Italy they beat us hollow. Pisa has not only Love Street and Lily Street, but Beautiful Ladies' Lane, and the Lane of the Beautiful Towers. In Genoa, after passing through Goldsmith Street, and another that leads up from it, you came out by the post-office upon the Piazza delle Fontane Amoroze,—the Place of the Amorous Fountains. There is a magnificent mansion in it, containing baths; and another, adorned on the outside with paintings of festive women. But here all the houses begin to be magnificent mansions, and you again recognise "Genova la Superba." From the Piazza delle Fontane Amoroze you turn into the Strada Nuova, which leads round through another sumptuous street into the Strada Balbi, fit, says Madame de Staël, for a congress of kings. The three streets are literally a succession of palaces on each side of the way; and these palaces are of costly architecture, and are adorned inside with the works of the Italian masters. Marble is lavished everywhere. It is like a street raised by Aladdin, to astonish his father-in-law, the Sultan. Yet there is one lamentable deficiency. Even these streets are narrow. I do not think the Strada Nuova is wider than Bond Street *without* the pavements. "A lane!" you cry. Yes, a lane of Whitehalls, encrusted with the richest architecture. Imagine how much the buildings lose by this confinement, and then wonder how it could have taken place. The alleged reason is, that in a hot country shade is wanted, and therefore beauty is sacrificed to utility. But the reason is a bad one: for porticos might have been used, as at Bologna, and the street made so wide as to render the disadvantage to the architecture a comparative nothing. The circumstance probably originated in some reasons connected with the ground, or the value of it, and the pressure of the population within the then city-walls. Some other magnificent streets, built subsequently, are wider, though still a good deal too narrow. The Genoese have found out, before ourselves, the folly of calling a street New Street; but they have not very wisely corrected it by naming one of their last, *Newest Street*,—

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Strada Nuovissima. Upon this principle, they must call the next street they build, Newer-than-all-street, or Extremely-new-street, or New-of-the-very-newest-description-street. They seem to have no idea of calling their streets, as we do, after the names of obscure builders and proprietors; a very dull custom and idle piece of vanity; especially in a country which abounds in great names. The streets of a metropolis ought to exhaust the whole nomenclature of great men, national or otherwise, before it begins with bricklayers. Nay, it would be handsome to see the names of illustrious foreigners mingled with those of the nation; and I have no doubt, that as nations become fused together by intercourse, such compliments will take place. They will be regarded, indeed, as discharges of debts: for who does not feel grateful to the wise and good of all countries?

In Genoa I first had the pleasure of seeing a religious procession. I found chairs brought out in one of the streets, and well-dressed company seated on each side as in a music-room. In Genoa some of the streets are paved all over. In the rest, the flat pavement is in the middle, and used both for traffic and walking. This, I suppose, originated in a vile custom which they have in several cities of Italy,—the same which Smollett speaks of in the Edinburgh of his time. Accidents frequently occur in consequence; but anything is sooner mended than a habit originating in idleness or moral indifference; and the inhabitants and the mules go on in their old way. But to return to the procession.—The reader must imagine a narrow street, with the company as above-mentioned, and an avenue left for the passage of the spectacle. The curiosity expressed in the company's faces was of a very mild description, the next thing to indifference. The music was heard at a little distance, then came a bustling sound of feet, and you saw the friars advancing. Nearly at the head of the procession was a little live Virgin, about four years old, walking in much state, with a silver-looking crown on her head, and a sceptre in her hand. A pleased relation helped her along, occasionally righting

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the crown and sceptre, which she bore with all that dignified gravity which children so soon imitate. By her side was another grown person, equally pleased, supporting a still smaller St. John, dressed in a lamb-skin, and apparently selected for his office on account of his red little waxen cheeks and curly flaxen hair. He did not seem quite as much *au fait* in the matter as the Virgin, but was as grave as need be, and not a little heated. A string of clergy followed in their gowns, carrying large lighted wax candles, and each one assisted by a personage, whose appearance was singularly striking to a foreigner from a Protestant country.

These coadjutors were neither more nor less than the very raggedest and dirtiest fellows, old and young, in all Genoa. There was one to every light. His object was to collect the wax that fell from the candles, which he did in a piece of paper; and the candle seemed to be made to gutter on purpose, in order to oblige him with as much of it as possible. The wax is sold by the gainer. I dare say this accompaniment of pauperism has a reference to the best doctrines of the Christian religion; but it is a singular mistake, and has a most unedifying appearance. Poverty should not be in this squalid condition, especially by the side of comfortable clergymen. The faces, too, of the poor fellows had, for the most part, all the signs of bad education. Now and then there was a head like the beggar who sat for Sir Joshua's Ugolino,—a fine head, but still a beggar. Some were of a portentous *raffishness*.

As to the priests and friars (for there followed a variety), I could not help observing, that, with very few exceptions, the countenances grew indifferent and worldly as they grew old. A few of the young ones were worthy of the heads in Raphael. One young man had a saint-like manner with him, casting down his eyes, and appearing absorbed in meditation; but I thought, when he did cast them up (which he instantly followed by casting them down again), it was in approaching the young ladies. He had certainly a head fit for an Abelard.



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I spoke just now of a bustle of feet. You do not know at first to what the loudness of it is owing, but the secret is explained as a large machine approaches, preceded by music. This is a group of wax-work as large as life, carried on the shoulders of ambling friars; for they are obliged to shuffle into that step on account of the weight. It represented, on the present occasion, St. Antonio kneeling before the Virgin, around whom were little angels fluttering like Cupids. It is impossible not to be reminded of Paganism by these spectacles. Indeed, as the Jupiter of the Capitol still sits there under his new name of St. Peter, so there is no doubt that the ancients, under other names, had these identical processions. The Cupids remain unaltered. The son of Myrrha himself could not look more lover-like than Sant' Antonio, nor Venus more polite than the Virgin; and the flowers stuck all about (the favourite emblem of the Cyprian youth), completed the likeness to an ancient festival of Adonis. So also would the priests have looked in their ancient garments; so would have come the music and the torches (paupers excepted); and so would the young priests have looked, in passing by the young ladies. To see the grandeurs of the Catholic religion, you must consult its rarest and most serious festivals, its pictures, and its poet Dante. I must not forget, that among the musical instruments were violins. One set of friars wore cowls over their faces, having holes only to see through, and looking extremely hideous,—like executioners. Or were they brethren of the benevolent order of the Misericordia, who disguise themselves, only the more nobly to attend to any disaster that calls upon them for aid? If so, observe how people may be calumniated merely in consequence of a spectator's ignorance. Among the persons who showed their faces, and who did not seem at all ashamed of them, was one good-natured, active individual, who ran back, with great vivacity, to encourage the machine-bearers. He looked as much as to say, "It is hot enough for you, Heaven knows!" and so it was.

Somebody has said, that in the south all the monks

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look like soldiers, and all the soldiers like monks. I dare say this might have been the case before the spread of liberal opinions; but it is so no longer. In Spain and Portugal it cannot be so; though the troops quartered in Genoa were for the most part undergrown and poor-looking men. The officers, however, were better. They had a propensity, common, I am told, in the south, to overgrown caps and epaulets; but they had otherwise a manly aspect, and looked more like gentlemen than any one else. This, indeed, is always the case where there is any difference—military habits begetting an air of self-possession. The Genoese soldiery were remarkably well-dressed. They had a bad way of learning their exercise. They accompanied every motion—the whole set of men—with a loud Ho! just as if a multitude of quick paviors were at work. This, besides encouraging noise, must take away from a ready dependence on the eye.

I used often to go to the churches in Genoa and elsewhere. I liked their quiet, their coolness, and their richness. Besides, I find my own religion in some part or other of all imaginative religions. In one of the churches are pillars of porphyry, and several are very imposing; but they struck me upon the whole as exhibiting the genius of a commercial rather than a tasteful country; as being more weighty and expensive than beautiful. There are some good pictures; but by far the greater number adorn the houses of the nobility. In all Catholic churches, there is an unfortunate mixture of petty ornaments with great, of dusty artificial flowers with fine altar-pieces, and of wretched little votive pictures, and silver hearts and legs, stuck up by the side of the noblest pieces of art.

This is another custom handed down from antiquity. I was reminded of Horace's *Ode to Pyrrha*, by a painting of a shipwreck, in which the wind blew one way and the sails another. If a man has got rid of a pain in the pericardium, he dedicates a little silver heart to the saint whose assistance he prayed for. If a toe has been the complaining part, he hangs up a toe. The general feeling is good, but not so the detail. It is

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affecting, however, to think that many of the hearts hung up (and they are by far the most numerous) have been owing to pangs of the spirit.

The most interesting thing I met with in the Genoese churches, next to a picture by Raphael and Giulio Romano in that of St. Stephen, was a sermon by a friar on Weeping. He seemed a popular preacher, and held the attention of his audience for a good hour. His exordium was in a gentle and restrained voice, but he warmed as he went on, and became as loud and authoritative as the tenderness of his subject could well permit. He gave us an account of all sorts of tears—of the tears of joy and the tears of sorrow, of penitent tears, tears of anger, spite, ill-temper, worldly regret, love, patience, etc.; and from what I could collect, with an ear unaccustomed to hear Italian spoken, a very true, as well as full and particular account it was. The style was more florid than in our northern sermons. He spoke of murmuring rills and warbling nightingales, and admitted all the merits of poetical luxury; but in denouncing luxury in general, it was curious to hear a stout, jovial-looking friar exhorting his auditors to value above all other enjoyments that of weeping in solitude. The natives are not likely to be too much softened by injunctions of this description.

The houses in Genoa are very high as well as large. Many of them are painted on the outside, not only with pictures, but with imitations of architecture; and whatever we may think of such a taste, these displays must have looked magnificent when the paintings were first executed. Some of them look so now; colours in this beautiful climate retaining their vividness for centuries out of doors. But in some instances, the paintings being done upon stucco, the latter has partly crumbled away, and this gives a shabby, dilapidated appearance to houses otherwise excellent. Nobody seems to think of repairing them. It is the same with many of the houses unpainted, and with common garden walls, most of which must have once made a splendid appearance. The mere spirit of commerce

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has long succeeded to its ancient inclusion of a better one; or Genoa would not be what it is in many respects. But a Genoese must nevertheless have grand notions of houses; especially as in this city, as well as the rest of Italy, shopkeepers sometimes occupy the ground floors of the finest mansions. You shall see a blacksmith or a carpenter looking out of a window where you might expect a duchess.

Neither Genoa nor even the country around it abounds in trees. It is a splendid seaport of stone and marble, and the mountains in the neighbourhood are barren, though they soon begin to be clothed with olive trees. But among the gigantic houses and stone walls you now and then detect a garden, with its statues and orange trees; some of the windows have vines trailed over them, not in the scanty fashion of our creepers, but like great luxuriant green hair hanging over the houses' eyes; and sometimes the very highest stories have a terrace along the whole length of the house embowered with them. Calling one day upon a gentleman who resided in an elevated part of the suburbs, and to get at whose abode I had walked through a hot sun and a city of stone, I was agreeably surprised, when the door opened, with a long yellow vista of an arcade of vines, at once basking in the sun and defending from it. In the suburbs there are some orchards in all the southern luxuriance of leaves and fruit. In one of these, I walked among heaps of vines, olives, cherry, orange, and almond trees, and had the pleasure of plucking fresh lemons from the bough, a merry old brown gardener, with a great straw hat and bare legs, admiring all the while my regard for those commonplaces, and encouraging me with a good-natured paternity to do what I pleased. The cherries were Brobdignagian, and bursting with juice. Next the orchard was a *wine-garden*, answering to our *tea-gardens*, with vine-arbours and seats ■ ■ with us, where people drink wine and play at their games. Returning through the city, I saw a man in one of the bye-streets alternately singing and playing on a pipe, exactly ■ ■ we conceive of the ancient shepherds.



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One night I went to the opera, which was indifferent enough, but I understand it is a good deal better sometimes. The favourite composer here and all over Italy, is Rossini, a truly national genius, full of the finest animal spirits, yet capable of the noblest gravity. My northern faculties were scandalized at seeing men in the pit with *fans*! Effeminacy is not always incompatible with courage, but it is a very dangerous help towards it; and I wondered what Doria would have said had he seen a captain of one of his galleys indulging his cheeks in this manner. Yet perhaps they did so in his own times. What would be effeminate in a man of the north, unaccustomed to it, may be a harmless trifle to a southern.

One night, on our first arrival in Genoa, the city was illuminated, and bonfires and rockets put in motion, in honour of St. John the Baptist. The effect from the harbour was beautiful; fire like the stars, having a brilliancy in this pure atmosphere, of which we have no conception. The scent of the perfumes employed in the bonfires was very perceptible on board ship.

You learn for the first time in this climate, what colours really are. No wonder it produces painters. An English artist of any enthusiasm might shed tears of vexation, to think of the dull medium through which blue and red come to him in his own atmosphere, compared with this. One day we saw a boat pass us, which instantly reminded us of Titian, and accounted for him: and yet it contained nothing but an old boatman in a red cap, and some women with him in other colours, one of them in a bright yellow petticoat. But a red cap in Italy goes by you, not like a mere cap, much less anything vulgar or butcher-like, but like what it is, an intense specimen of the colour of red. It is like a scarlet bud in the blue atmosphere. The old boatman, with his brown hue, his white shirt, and his red cap, made a complete picture; and so did the women and the yellow petticoat. I have seen pieces of orange-coloured silk hanging out against a wall at a dyer's, which gave the eye

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a pleasure truly sensual. Some of these boatmen are very fine men. I was rowed to shore one day by a man the very image of Kemble. He had nothing but his shirt on, and it was really grand to see the mixed power and gracefulness with which all his limbs came into play as he pulled the oars, occasionally turning his heroic profile to give a glance behind him at other boats. They generally row standing, and pushing from them.

The most interesting sight, after all, in Genoa, was the one we first saw—the Doria palace. Bonaparte lodged there when he was in Genoa; but this, which would have been one of its greatest praises, had he done all he could for liberty, is one of its least. Andrew Doria<sup>1</sup> dwelt there after a long life, which he spent in giving security and glory to his country, and which he crowned by his refusal of power. “I know the value,” said he, “of the liberty I have earned for my country, and shall I finish by taking it from her?” When upwards of eighty, he came forward and took the command of an armament in a rough season. His friends remonstrated. “Excuse me,” said he; “I have never yet stopped for anything when my duty was in the way, and at my time of life one cannot get rid of one’s old habits.” This is the very perfection of a speech—a mixture of warrantable self-esteem, modesty, energy, pathos, and pleasantry; for it contains them all. He died upwards of ninety.

I asked for Doria’s descendants, and was told they were rich. The Pallavicini, with whom the Cromwell family were connected, are extant. I could ascertain nothing more of the other old families, except that they had acquired a considerable dislike of the English; which, under all circumstances at that time, was in their favour. I found one thing, however, which they *did*; and I must correct, in favour of this one thing, what I have said about the Doria palace; for the sight of it upon the whole gave me still greater satisfaction. This was, the overthrow of the Genoese Inquisition.

[<sup>1</sup> Andrew Doria (1468–1560).]

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There was a wish to rebuild it; but this the old families opposed; and the last ruins of it were being cleared away. It was pleasant to see the workmen crashing its old marble jaws.

Genoa has shown how much and how little can be done by mere commerce. A great man here and there in former times is an exception; and the princely mansions, the foundations of schools and hospitals, and the erection of costly churches, attest that in similar periods money-getting had not degenerated into miserliness. But the Genoese did not cultivate mind enough to keep up the breed of patriots; and it remained for an indignant spirit to issue out of a neighbouring arbitrary monarchy and read them lectures on their absorption in money-getting. Alfieri,<sup>1</sup> in his *Satire on Commerce*, ranks them with their mules. It avails nothing to a people to be merely acquiring money, while the rest of the world are acquiring ideas;—a truth which England has gloriously understood, and, it is to be trusted, will still more gloriously illustrate. It turns out, that Genoa and its neighbourhood have no pretensions to Columbus; which is lucky for her. He was born at Cuccaro, in the province of Aquì, not far from Asti—Alfieri's birthplace. Chiabrera,<sup>2</sup> who is sometimes called the Italian Pindar, was born near Genoa, at Savona. I have read little of him; but he must have merit to be counted an Italian classic; and it says little for the Genoese, that I could not find a copy of his works at their principal bookseller's. I have since become better acquainted with him. He was a bigot in his religion, and of so violent a temper, as to have been guilty, twice over, of what he calls manslaughter in self-vindication: yet he had not only force and expression in his graver lyrics, but a light and gay turn for Anacreontics. He tried to introduce a Greek turn of writing into the language, especially in compound words; but the practice did not obtain. Frugoni,<sup>3</sup> their other poet, was born, I believe, in the same place.

[<sup>1</sup> Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803).]

[<sup>2</sup> Gabriel Chiabrera (1552-1637).]

[<sup>3</sup> Charles Innocent Frugoni (1692-1768).]

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He is easy and lively, but wrote a great deal too much, probably for bread. There is a pleasant petition of his in verse to the Genoese senate, about some family claims, in which he gives an account of his debts that must have startled the faculties of that prudent and opulent body. A few more Frugonis, however, and a few less rich men, would have been better for Genoa. The best production I ever met with from a Genoese pen, is a noble sonnet by Giambattista Pastorini, a Jesuit; written after the bombardment of the city by the troops of Louis XIV. The poet glories in the resistance made by Genoa, and kisses the ruins caused by the bombardment with transport. What must have been his mortification, when he saw the Doge and a number of senators set out for France, to go and apologize to Louis XIV. for having been so erroneous as to defend their country!

There is a proverb which says of Genoa, that it has a sea without fish, land without trees, men without faith, and women without modesty. Ligurian trickery is a charge as old as Virgil. But M. Millin very properly observes (*Voyage en Savoie*, etc.) that accusations of this description are generally made by jealous neighbours, and that the Genoese have most likely no more want of good faith than other Italians who keep shops. I must confess, at the same time, that the most bare-faced trick ever attempted to be practised on myself, was by a Genoese. The sea, it is said, has plenty of fish, only the duty on it is very high, and the people prefer butchers' meat. This is hardly a good reason why fish is not eaten at a seaport. Perhaps it is naturally scarce at the extreme point of a gulf like that of Genoa. The land is naked enough, certainly, in the immediate vicinity, though it soon begins to be otherwise. As to the women, they have fine eyes and figures, but by no means appear destitute of modesty; and modesty has much to do with appearance. Wholesale charges of want of modesty are, at all times and in all places, most likely to be made by those who have no modesty themselves.

The Governor of Genoa, at that time, was a Savoyard



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Marquis of the name of D'Yennes, and he is said to have related with much glee a current anecdote about himself. As he was coming to take possession of his appointment, he stopped at a town not far from Genoa, the inhabitants of which were ambitious of doing him honour. They accordingly gave him an entertainment, at which was an allegorical picture containing *a hyæna surrounded with Cupids*. The hyæna was supposed to be a translation of his name. Upon requesting an explanation of the compliment, he received the following smiling reply:—"Les Amours, Monsieur, sont nous : et vous êtes la bête." ("The loves, sir, are ourselves : the beast is you.")

### CHAPTER XXI

FLORENCE—BACCHUS IN TUSCANY—THE VENUS DE' MEDICI—AND ITALY IN GENERAL

[JULY, 1823, TO SEPTEMBER, 1825.]

**R**ESOLVING to remain a while in Italy, though not in Genoa, we took our departure from that city in the summer of the year 1823, and returned into Tuscany in order to live at Florence. We liked Genoa on some accounts, and none the less for having a son born there, who, from that hour to this, has been a comfort to us.<sup>1</sup> But in Florence there were more conveniences for us, more books, more fine arts, more illustrious memories, and a greater concourse of Englishmen; so that we might possess, as it were, Italy and England together. In Genoa we no longer possessed a companion of our own country; for Mrs. Shelley had gone to England;<sup>2</sup> and we felt strange enough at first, thus seeking a home by ourselves in a foreign land.

<sup>1</sup> This was written in the year 1849, and held good till the year 1852, when alas! he died.

[This son was Vincent Hunt, who died from consumption in October, 1852.]

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Shelley returned to England in the autumn of 1823.]

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Unfortunately, in the first instance, the movement did us no good; for it was the height of summer when we set out, and in Italy this is not the time for being in motion. The children, however, living temperately, and not yet being liable to cares which temperance could not remove, soon recovered. It was otherwise with the parents; but there is a habit in being ill, as in everything else; and we disposed ourselves to go through our task of endurance as cheerfully as might be.

In Genoa you heard nothing in the streets but the talk of money. I hailed it as a good omen in Florence, that the first two words which caught my ears were flowers and women (*Fiori* and *Donne*). The night of our arrival we put up at an hotel in a very public street, and were kept awake (as agreeably as illness would let us be) by songs and guitars. It was one of our pleasantest experiences of the south; and, for the moment, we lived in the Italy of books. One performer to a jovial accompaniment sang a song about somebody's fair wife, which set the street in roars of laughter.

From the hotel we went to a lodging in the street of Beautiful Women—*Via delle Belle Donne*—a name which it is a sort of tune to pronounce. We there heard one night a concert in the street; and looking-out, saw music-stands, books, etc. in regular order, and amateurs performing as in a room. Opposite our lodgings was an inscription on a house, purporting that it was the hospital of the Monks of Vallombrosa. Wherever you turned was music or a graceful memory.

From the *Via delle Belle Donne* we went to live in the Piazza Santa Croce, in a corner house on the left side of it, near to the church of that name, which contains the ashes of Galileo, Michael Angelo, Boccaccio, Macchiavelli, Alfieri, and others. Englishmen call it the Florentine Westminster Abbey, but it has not the venerable look of the Abbey, nor, indeed, any resemblance at all—but that of a building half-finished; though it is several hundred years old.

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There are so many of these unfinished old edifices in Florence, owing to decline in the funds left for their completion, that they form a peculiar feature in this otherwise beautiful city, and a whole volume has been devoted to the subject. On the other side of this sepulchre of great men is the monastery in which Pope Sixtus the Fifth went stooping as if in decrepitude—"looking," as he said afterwards, "for the keys of St. Peter." We lodged in the house of a Greek, who came from the island of Andros, and was called Dionysius; a name which has existed there, perhaps, ever since the god who bore it. Our host was a proper Bacchanalian, always drunk, and spoke faster than I ever heard. He had a "fair Andrian" for his mother, old and ugly, whose name was Bella.

The church of Santa Croce would disappoint you as much inside as out, if the presence of the remains of great men did not always cast a mingled shadow of the awful and beautiful over one's thoughts. Any large space, also devoted to the purposes of religion, disposes the mind to the loftiest of speculations. The vaulted sky out of doors appears small, compared with the opening into immensity represented by that very enclosure—that larger dwelling than common, entered by a little door. The door is like a grave, and the enclosure like a vestibule of heaven.

Agreeably to our old rustic propensities, we did not stop long in the city. We left Santa Croce to live at Maiano, a village on the slope of one of the Fiesolan hills, about two miles off. It gives its name to one of the earliest of the Italian poets, precursor of the greater Dante, called Dante of Maiano. He had a namesake living on the spot, in the person of a little boy—a terrible rover out of bounds, whom his parents were always shouting for with the apostrophe of "O Dante!" He excelled in tearing his clothes and getting a dirty face and hands. I heard his mother one evening hail his return home with the following welcome:—"O Dante, what a brute beast you are!" I thought how probable it was, that the Florentine adversaries of the great poet, his

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namesake, would have addressed their abuser in precisely the same terms, after reading one of his infernal flayings of them in the Lakes of Tartarus. Dante and Alfieri were great favourites with a Hebrew family (jewellers, if I remember), who occupied the ground-floor of the house we lived in, the Villa Morandi, and who partook the love of music in common with their tribe. Their little girls declaimed out of Alfieri in the morning, and the parents led concerts in the garden of an evening. They were an interesting set of people, with marked characters; and took heartily to some specimens which I endeavoured to give them of the genius of Shakespeare. They had a French governess, who, though a remarkably good speaker of English in general, told me one day, in eulogizing the performance of one of the gentlemen who was a player on the bassoon, that "his excellence lay in the *bason*." It was the grandfather of this family whom I have described in another work (*Men, Women, and Books*),<sup>1</sup> as hailed one May morning by the assembled merry-makers of the hamlet, in verses which implied that he was the efficient cause of the exuberance of the season.

The manners of this hamlet were very pleasant and cheerful. The priest used to come of an evening, and take a Christian game at cards with his Hebrew friends. A young Abate would dance round a well with the daughters of the vine-growers, the whole party singing as they footed. I remember the burden of one of the songs—

"Ne di giorno, ne di sera,  
Non passiamo la selva nera."

(Night and morn be it understood,  
Nobody passes the darksome wood.)

One evening all the young peasantry in the neighbourhood assembled in the hall of the village, by leave of the proprietor (an old custom), and had the most energetic ball I ever beheld. The walls of the

[<sup>1</sup> Under the title of "The Month of May."]



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room seemed to spin round with the waltz, as though it would never leave off—the whirling faces all looking grave, hot, and astonished at one another. Among the musicians I observed one of the apprentices of my friend the bookseller, an evidence of a twofold mode of getting money not unknown in England. I recollected his face the more promptly, inasmuch as not many days previous he had accompanied me to my abode with a set of books, and astonished me by jumping on a sudden from one side of me to the other. I asked what was the matter, and he said, “A viper, sir,” (*una vipera, signore*). He seemed to think that an Englishman might as well settle the viper as the bill.

Notwithstanding these amusements at Maiano, I passed a very disconsolate time; yet the greatest comfort I experienced in Italy (next to writing a book which I shall mention) was living in that neighbourhood, and thinking, as I went about, of Boccaccio. Boccaccio's father had a house at Maiano, supposed to have been situated at the Fiesolan extremity of the hamlet.<sup>1</sup> That many-hearted writer (whose sentiment outweighed his levity a hundred fold, as a fine face is oftener serious than it is merry) was so fond of the place, that he has not only laid the two scenes of the *Decameron* on each side of it, with the valley which his company resorted to in the middle, but has made the two little streams that embrace Maiano, the Affrico and the Mensola, the hero and heroine of his *Nimphale Fiesolano*. A lover and his mistress are changed into them, after the fashion of Ovid. The scene of another of his works is on the banks of the Mugnone, a river a little distant; and the *Decameron* is full of the neighbouring villages. Out of the windows of one side of our house we saw the turret of the Villa Gherardi,<sup>2</sup> to

[<sup>1</sup> See Roberto Gherardi's *La Villeggiatura di Majano* (1740) quoted in Mrs. Ross's *Florentine Villas*, 1901.]

[<sup>2</sup> See *Florentine Villas* (1901, p. 132 sq.), by Janet Ross. Mr. and Mrs. Ross are at present the hospitable owners of the castellated villa known as Poggio Gherardo, two miles east of Florence above the Seltignano road. The east wing was destroyed by Sir John Hawkwood. But for this, the square machicolated castle has changed little since 1348.]



*William Hazlitt.*  
*by Bewick.*



## FLORENCE—ITALY IN GENERAL

which, according to his biographers, his "joyous company" resorted in the first instance. A house belonging to the Macchiavelli was nearer, a little to the left; and farther to the left, among the blue hills, was the white village of Settignano, where Michael Angelo was born. The house is still in possession of the family. From our windows on the other side we saw, close to us, the Fiesole of antiquity and of Milton, the site of the Boccaccio-house before mentioned still closer, the *Decameron's* Valley of Ladies at our feet; and we looked over towards the quarter of the Mugnone and of a house of Dante, and in the distance beheld the mountains of Pistoia. Lastly, from the terrace in front, Florence lay clear and cathedraled before us, with the scene of Redi's *Bacchus* rising on the other side of it, and the Villa of Arcetri, illustrious for Galileo. Hazlitt,<sup>1</sup> who came to see me there (and who afterwards, with one of his felicitous images, described the state of mind in which he found me, by saying that I was "moulting"), beheld the scene around us with the admiration natural to a lover of old folios and great names, and confessed, in the language of Burns, that it was a sight to enrich the eyes.

But I stuck to my Boccaccio haunts, as to an old home. I lived with the true human being, with his friends of the *Falcon* and the *Basil*, and my own not unworthy melancholy; and went about the flowering lanes and hills, solitary indeed, and sick to the heart, but not unsustained. In looking back to such periods of one's existence, one is surprised to find how much they surpass many seasons of mirth, and what a rich tone of colour their very darkness assumes, as in some fine old painting. My almost daily walk was to Fiesole, through a path skirted with wild myrtle and cyclamen; and I stopped at the cloister of the Doccia, and sat on the pretty melancholy platform behind it, reading or looking through the pines down to Florence. In the

[<sup>1</sup> William Hazlitt had married his second wife early in 1824, and in the August of that year he made a tour of the continent with her and his son by his first wife, Florence being one of the places that he visited.]



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Valley of Ladies I found some English trees (trees, not vine and olive), and even a meadow; and these, while I made them furnish me with a bit of my old home in the north, did no injury to the memory of Boccaccio, who is of all countries, and who finds his home wherever we do ourselves, in love, in the grave, in a desert island.

But I had other friends, too, not far off, English, and of the right sort. My friend, Charles Armitage Brown (Keats' friend, and the best commentator on Shakespeare's sonnets), occupied for a time the little convent of San Baldassare, near Maiano, where he represented the body corporate of the former possessors, with all the joviality of a comfortable natural piety. The closet in his study, where it is probable the church treasures had been kept, was filled with the humanities of modern literature, not the less Christian for being a little sceptical: and we had a zest in fancying that we discoursed of love and wine in the apartments of the Lady Abbess. I remember I had the pleasure of telling an Italian gentleman there the joke attributed to Sydney Smith, about sitting next a man at table, who possessed a "seven-parson power;" and he understood it and rolled with laughter, crying out—"Oh, ma bello! ma bellissimo!" (Beautiful! exquisite!) There, too, I had the pleasure of dining in company with an English beauty (Mrs. W.), who appeared to be such as Boccaccio might have admired, capable both of mirth and gravity; and she had a child with her that reflected her graces. The appearance of one of these young English mothers among Italian women, looks (to English eyes at least) like domesticity among the passions. It is a pity when you return to England, that the generality of faces do not keep up the charm. You are then apt to think, that an Italian beauty among English women would look like poetry among the sullens.

Our friend Brown removed to Florence; and together with the books and newspapers, made me a city visitor. I there became acquainted with Landor, to whose genius I had made the *amende honorable* the year before; and

## FLORENCE—ITALY IN GENERAL

with Mr. Kirkup,<sup>1</sup> an English artist, who was not poor enough, I fear, either in purse or accomplishment, to cultivate his profession as he ought to have done; while at the same time he was so beloved by his friends, that they were obliged to get at a distance from him before they could tell him of it. Yet I know not why they should; for a man of a more cordial generosity, with greater delicacy in showing it, I never met with: and such men deserve the compliment of openness. They know how to receive it.

To the list of my acquaintances, I had the pleasure of adding Lord Dillon; who, in the midst of an exuberance of temperament more than national, concealed a depth of understanding, and a genuine humanity of knowledge, to which proper justice was not done in consequence. The luxuriant vegetation and the unstable ground diverted suspicion from the ore beneath it. I remember him saying something one evening about a very ill-used description of persons in the London streets, for which Shakespeare might have taken him by the hand; though the proposition came in so startling a shape, that the company were obliged to be shocked in self-defence. The gallant Viscount was a cavalier of the old school of the Meadowses and Newcastles, with something of the O'Neal superadded; and instead of wasting his words upon tyrants or Mr. Pitt, ought to have been eternally at the head of his brigade, charging mercenaries on his war horse, and meditating romantic stories.

When the *Liberal* was put an end to, I had contributed some articles to a new work set up by my brother, called the *Literary Examiner*.<sup>2</sup> Being too ill

[<sup>1</sup> Mr. Seymour Kirkup was a friend of Joseph Severn and one of the few who witnessed Shelley's first burial at Rome. Hunt addressed a letter of thanks to him for his attendance. Mr. H. B. Forman in his article "Shelley's Life near Spezzia, his death and burials," *Macmillan's Magazine*, printed Mr. Kirkup's reply in which he expressed a desire to meet Hunt.]

[<sup>2</sup> *The Literary Examiner: consisting of the Indicator, a Review of Books, and Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose and Verse*. London, 1823. Edited by Leigh Hunt. This is a literary supplement to the *Examiner* of which twenty-six numbers were published, the first on July 5, 1823.]

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at Florence to continue those, I did what I could, and had recourse to the lightest and easiest translation I could think of, which was that of Redi's *Bacco in Toscana*.<sup>1</sup> The *Bacco in Toscana* (Bacchus in Tuscany), is a mock-heroical account of the Tuscan wines, put into the mouth of that god, and delivered in dithyrambics. It is ranked among the Italian classics, and deserves to be so for its style and originality. Bacchus is represented sitting on a hill outside the walls of Florence, in company with Ariadne and his usual attendants, and jovially giving his opinion of the wines, as he drinks them in succession. He gets drunk after a very mortal fashion; but recovers, and is borne away into ecstasy by a draught of Montepulciano, which he pronounces to be the King of Wines.

I was the more incited to attempt a version of this poem, inasmuch as it was thought a choke-pear for translators. English readers asked me how I proposed to render the "famous"

"Mostra aver poco giudizio"—

(a line much quoted); and Italians asked what I meant to do with the "compound words" (which are very scarce in their language). I laughed at the famous "mostra aver," which it required but a little animal spirits to "give as good as it brought;" and I had the pleasure of informing Italians, that the English language abounded in compound words, and could make as many more as it pleased.

At Maiano, I wrote the articles which appeared in the *Examiner*, under the title of the *Wishing Cap*.<sup>2</sup> Prob-

[<sup>1</sup> In 1824 or 1825. Redi was physician to the Grand Duke Cosmo of Tuscany; his love of wine was ideal, for he was himself a water-drinker. The autobiographer had met with a copy of it in the Sion College Library, while he was yet in prison; and he found in the poem mention of Maiano, and of persons, friends of Redi, whose families still remained at Maiano, the Bellini and the Salviati.—T.H.]

[Francesco Redi (1626–1698) a physician and poet; also a contributor to the great dictionary of the Italian Academy of La Crusca. The title of Hunt's volume is as follows:—*Bacchus in Tuscany: A Dithyrambic Poem from the Italian of Francesco Redi, with notes original and select.* By Leigh Hunt. London, 1825. With a dedication to his brother John Hunt.]

[<sup>2</sup> In the *Examiner* for March 28, 1824 to October 16, 1825. They

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ably the reader knows nothing about them; but they contained some germs of a book he may not be unacquainted with, called *The Town*, as well as some articles since approved of in the volume entitled *Men, Women, and Books*. The title was very genuine.

When I put on my cap, and pitched myself in imagination into the thick of Covent Garden, the pleasure I received was so vivid,—I turned the corner of a street so much in the ordinary course of things, and was so tangibly present to the pavement, the shop-windows, the people, and a thousand agreeable recollections which looked me naturally in the face,—that sometimes when I walk there now, the impression seems hardly more real. I used to feel as if I actually pitched my soul there, and that spiritual eyes might have seen it shot over from Tuscany into York Street, like a rocket. It is much pleasanter, however, on waking up, to find soul and body together in one's native land:—yes, even than among thy olives and vines, Boccaccio! I not only missed "the town" in Italy; I missed my old trees—oaks and elms. Tuscany, in point of wood, is nothing but olive-ground and vineyard. I saw there, how it was, that some persons when they return from Italy say it has no wood, and some, a great deal. The fact is, that many parts of it, Tuscany included, has no wood to *speak of*; and it wants larger trees interspersed with small ones, in the manner of our hedge-row elms. A tree of a reasonable height is a godsend. The olives are low and hazy-looking, like dry sallows. You have plenty of these; but to an Englishman, looking from a height, they appear little better than brushwood. Then, there are no meadows, no proper green lanes (at least, I saw none), no paths leading over field and style, no hayfields in June, nothing of that luxurious combination of green and russet, of grass, wild flowers, and woods, over which a lover of Nature can stroll for hours with a foot as fresh as the stag's; unvexed with chalk, dust, and an eternal public path; and able to lie

were printed in book form in America some years after the author's death by J. E. Babson. *The Wishing-Cap Papers*. Now first collected. Boston, 1873. There was a London edition in 1874.]



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down, if he will, and sleep in clover. In short (saving, alas! a finer sky and a drier atmosphere, great ingredients in good spirits), we have the best part of Italy in books; and this we can enjoy in England. Give me Tuscany in Middlesex or Berkshire, and the Valley of Ladies between Harrow and Jack Straw's Castle. The proud names and flinty ruins above the Mensola may keep their distance. Boccaccio shall build a bower for us out of his books, of all that we choose to import; and we will have daisies and fresh meadows besides. An Italian may prefer his own country after the same fashion; and he is right. I knew a young English-woman, who, having grown up in Tuscany, thought the landscapes of her native country insipid, and could not imagine how people could live without walks in vineyards. To me, Italy had a certain hard taste in the mouth. Its mountains were too bare, its outlines too sharp, its lanes too stony, its voices too loud, its long summer too dusty. I longed to bathe myself in the grassy balm of my native fields. But I was ill, unhappy, in a perpetual low fever; and critics, in such condition, or in any condition which is not laudatory, should give us a list of the infirmities under which they sit down to estimate what they differ with. What a comfort, by the way, that would be to many an author! What uncongenialities, nay, what incompetencies we should discover! What a relief to us to find that it was "only A's opinion!" or "only B's!" and how we should laugh at him while giving it in his own person, *vivâ voce*, instead of the mysterious body corporate of "We." Nay, how we do laugh,—provided the bookseller's account will let us, provided omissions of notice, or commissions of it, have not been the ruin of our "edition!" Thus may Italians laugh at me, should they read my English criticisms on their beautiful country.

Disappointed of transplanting Redi's Italian vines into England, I thought I would try if I could bring over some literature of modern English growth into Italy. I proposed to a Florentine bookseller to set up a quarterly compilation from the English magazines.

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Our periodical publications are rarely seen in Italy though our countrymen are numerous. In the year 1825, two hundred English families were said to be resident in Florence. In Rome, visitors, though not families, were more numerous; and the publication, for little cost, might have been sent all over the Peninsula. The plan was to select none but the very best articles, and follow them with an original one commenting upon their beauties, so as to make readers in Italy well acquainted with our living authors. But the Tuscan authorities were frightened.

"You must submit the publication (said my bookseller) to a censorship."

"Be it so."

"But you must let them see every sheet before it goes to press, in order that there may be no religion or politics."

"Very well:—to please the reverend censors, we will have no religion. Politics also are out of the question."

"Ay, but politics may creep in."

"They shall not."

"Ah, but they may creep in (say the authorities) without your being aware; and then what is to be done?"

"Why, if neither the editor nor the censors are aware, I do not see how any very vivid impression need be apprehended with regard to the public."

"That has a very plausible sound; but how if the censors do not understand English?"

"There, indeed, they confound us. All I can say is, that the English understand the censors, and I see we must drop our intended work."

This was the substance of a discourse which I had with the bookseller, in answer to the communications which he brought me from his Government. The prospectus had been drawn out; the bookseller had rubbed his hands at it, thinking of the money which the best writers in England were preparing for him; but he was forced to give up the project. "Ah," said he to me in his broken English, as he sat in winter-time with

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cold feet and an irritable face, pretending to keep himself warm by tantalizing the tips of his fingers over a little bason of charcoal, "Ah, you are very happy in England. You can get so much money as you please."

I know not what the Tuscan Government would have said to another book which I wrote at Maiano, and which English readers have not yet heard of, at least not publicly; for, though intended for publication, and the least faulty book, perhaps, which I have written, it has hitherto been only privately circulated. [A warm-hearted friend, of admirable taste, who has subsequently achieved for himself a high place in literature, requested, and obtained, leave to print it at his own expense.] It is entitled, *Christianism, or Belief and Unbelief Reconciled*; <sup>1</sup> and contains, among other matters, the conclusions which the author had then come to on points of religious belief and practice. I wrote it because I was in a state of health which I thought might terminate fatally, and I was anxious before I died to do what good I could, as far as my reflections on those points had, in my opinion, enabled me. I shall say more of it towards the end of this volume. I had the consolation—I hope not the unchristian one—of writing it at a window opposite the dissolved convent of the Doccia; for though I contemplated with pleasure that image of departing superstition—then a lay abode, beautifully overlooking the country—the book had any design in the world but that of grieving one gentle heart.<sup>2</sup>

Attached, however, as associations of this nature, and those with Boccaccio and Redi, contributed to make me to my country walks, I often varied them by going into Florence; or rather, I went there whenever the graver part of them became too much for me. I loved Florence, and saw nothing in it but cheerfulness and ele-

[<sup>1</sup> *Christianism; or Belief and Unbelief Reconciled; being Exercises and Meditations. Not for sale; only 75 copies printed.* 1832. pp. xviii. 59. The introduction is signed by Leigh Hunt. John Forster was the friend who printed this pamphlet at his own expense.]

[<sup>2</sup> This book has been since enlarged and systematized, and is now entitled the *Religion of the Heart*. [*The Religion of the Heart: a Manual of Faith and Duty*. London, 1853. pp. xxiv. 259.]

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gance. I loved the name ; I loved the fine arts and the old palaces ; I loved the memories of Pulci and Lorenzo de' Medici, the latter of whom I could never consider in any other light than that of a high-minded patron of genius, himself a poet ; I loved the good-natured, intelligent inhabitants, who saw fair play between industry and amusement ; nay, I loved the Government itself, however afraid it was of English periodicals ; for at that time it was good-natured also, and could "live and let live," after a certain quiet fashion, in that beautiful bye-corner of Europe, where there were no longer any wars, nor any great regard for the parties that had lately waged them, illegitimate or legitimate. The reigning family were Austrians, but with a difference, long Italianized, and with no great family affection. One good-natured Grand Duke had succeeded another for several generations ; and the liberalism of that extraordinary prince, the first Leopold, was still to be felt, in a general way, very sensibly, though it lost in some particulars after the triumph of the allies, and the promises broken to the Carbonari ;<sup>1</sup> nor, indeed, has the reigning Grand Duke in his old age and his fright about Mazzini, bettered them.

Talking of Grand Dukes and de' Medicis, be it known, before I forget to mention it (so modest am I by nature), that on one of these visits to Florence, and in the house

<sup>1</sup> The sixth volume of the *Florentine History* of the late Captain Henry Edward Napier is almost entirely occupied by a full and excellent account of the reign of this admirable and indeed wonderful prince, Leopold the First, Grand Duke of Tuscany, afterwards Emperor of Germany. He was not only a reformer, but a reformer of the noblest and most liberal kind, and this, too, notwithstanding opposition the most harassing from the priests, from his own ministers, nay, actually from the very nation for whom he reformed, and who had not yet been well taught enough to understand him. Such readers as are not acquainted with him, are earnestly recommended to become so ; and they cannot do it better than in the pages of Captain Napier, who was himself a worthy member of a remarkable family, and a writer as honest as he was painstaking. I have the honour to possess a copy of his work, given me by himself ; and I regret that I had not time to make that thorough intimacy with it before he died, which would have enabled me to say of it what I say now. I do not agree with some of his conclusions respecting what is finally desirable in the nature of government ; but I do not wonder at them, considering what a set of iniquitous princes he had for the most part to describe.



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of ■ Medici himself, I had the happiness of folding to my bosom, with reciprocal pleasure in our faces, no less ■ personage than a certain lovely Maddalena de' Medici, daughter of said distinguished individual, and now, at this moment, in all probability, lovelier than ever; seeing, alas! that she was then little more than a baby, just able to express her satisfaction at being noticed by her admirers.

I wish I could equally have admired the famous Venus de' Medici, in whom I expected to find the epitome of all that was charming; for I had been led, by what I thought the popular misrepresentations of her, to trust almost as little to plaster casts as to engravings. But how shall I venture to express what I felt? how own the disappointment which I shared with the "Smelfungus" of Sterne,<sup>1</sup> instead of the raptures which I had looked for in unison with Sterne himself, and Thomson, and, perhaps, all the travelled connoisseurs of the earth, Smollett alone and Hazlitt excepted?

When the intelligent traveller approaches Florence, when he ascends the top of the gentle mountains that surround it, and sees the beautiful city lying in a plain full of orchards—what are the anticipations and ideas in which he indulges? Not surely images of ■ Grand Duke, however grand or even good he may be, nor of divers other Grand Dukes that preceded him, nor of the difference between *tables d'hôte*, nor any such local phenomena, eminent in the eyes of the postilion:—he thinks of the old glories of Florence: of Lorenzo de' Medici, of Dante, of Boccaccio, of Michael Angelo, of Galileo, of the river Arno and Fiesole, of the rank which that small city has challenged, by the sole power of wit,

[<sup>1</sup> "I met Smelfungus (Smollett) in the grand portico of the Pantheon—he was just coming out of it.—'Tis nothing but a huge cock-pit," said he—I wish you had said nothing worse of the Venus of Medicis, replied I, for in passing through Florence I had heard he had fallen foul upon the goddess and used her worse than ■ common strumpet without the least provocation in nature." *Sentimental Journey*, 1768 (vol. i. p. 86). Smollett's opinion of the statue will be found in his *Travels Through France and Italy*, 1766, in which he says among other things "I cannot help thinking that there is no beauty in the features of Venus, and that the attitude is awkward and out of character."]

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among the greatest names of the earth ; of the lively and clever generation that have adorned it, playing their music, painting their pictures, and pouring forth a language of pearls ; and last, but not least, he thinks of the goddess who still *lives* there—the far-famed Venus de' Medici, triumphing in her worshippers as if no such thing as a new religion had taken place, and attracting adoration from all parts of the earth.

He enters, and worships likewise. I, too, entered and worshipped, prepared to be the humblest of her admirers. I did not even hurry to the gallery as soon as I arrived. I took a respectful time for going properly. When I entered the room, I retained my eyes a little on the objects around her, willing to make my approaches like a devout lover, and to prepare myself for that climax of delight. It seemed too great a pleasure to be vulgarly and abruptly taken. At length I look. I behold, and I worship indeed ; but not for the old reasons. How shall I venture to state the new ones ? I must make a little further preface, and will take the opportunity of noticing the gallery itself.

The celebrated Florentine Gallery is an oblong, occupying the upper story of a whole street of government offices. The street is joined at the end, though opening into a portico underneath on the river Arno, so that the gallery runs almost entirely round the three sides. The longer corridor is 430 feet long (French), the intermediate one 97 feet. They are 11 feet broad, 20 feet high, floored with variegated stucco, and painted on the roof *in fresco*.

The windows are ample, curtained from the sun, and generally opened to admit the air. The whole forms a combination of neatness and richness, of clear and soft light, of silence, firmness, and grace, worthy to be the cabinet of what it contains. These contents are statues, busts, pictures, sarcophagi ; the paintings filling the interstices between the sculptures, and occupying the continued space over their heads. The first things you behold on entering the gallery are busts of Roman emperors and their kindred.

But these more obvious portions of the gallery are

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not *all*. These illustrious corridors present certain tempting-looking doors, which excite curiosity, and these doors open into rooms which are the very boudoirs of connoisseurship. They contain specimens of the different schools, collections of gems and medals, and select assemblages from the whole artistic treasure. One of them, called the Tribune, a little more perhaps than twenty feet in diameter, is a concentration of beauty and wealth. It is an octagon, lighted from above, floored with precious marble, and over-arched with a cupola adorned with mother-o'-pearl. But I knew nothing of all this till I read it in a book. I saw only the pictures and the statues. Here, among other wonderful things, is the more wonderful Venus of Titian. Here is the Fornarina of Raphael; his Julius the Second, with four other pictures, showing the progress of his hand; the adoring Virgin of Correggio; the Epiphany of Albert Dürer; a masterpiece of Vandyke; another of Paul Veronese; another by Domenichino; another by Leonardo da Vinci. In the middle of the room, forming a square, stand the famous Apollo, with his arm over his head, leaning on a tree; the Grinder, or Listening Slave; the Wrestlers; and the Faun playing the Cymbals. And as the climax of attraction to all this, with the statues and paintings in attendance, elevated by herself, opposite the doorway, and approached by a greater number of pilgrims than are now drawn to Italy by the Virgin herself, presides the goddess of the place, the ancient deity restored and ever young—the far-famed Venus de' Medici.

“So stands the statue which enchants the world.”<sup>1</sup>

Seeing what I saw, and feeling as I did, when I first beheld this renowned production, glittering with the admiration of ages as well as its own lustre, it was easy to conceive the indignation which the Florentines displayed when they saw it take its departure for France, and the vivacity with which Bonaparte broke out when he spoke of its acquisition. (See page 97 of the first volume.)

[<sup>1</sup> Thompson's *Seasons* : “Summer” line 1343.]

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After this second preface, which is another genuine transcript of my feelings on entering the room, I should again be at a loss how to venture upon the opinion I am about to express if I did not recollect that the *entire* statue is acknowledged not to be antique, and that the very important part which called forth my disappointment is by some *supposed* not to be so. The statue was originally dug up near Tivoli, at Hadrian's Villa, and was then in a broken as well as in a mutilated state. Luckily the divisions were such as to refit easily; but it is confessed that the whole right arm was wanting, and so was part of the left arm from the elbow downwards.

"With the exception of a little bit of the body or so," says the French editor of the *Guide*, "all the rest is evidently antique."<sup>1</sup>

This, it appears, is disputable; but nobody doubts the greater part of the body, and the body is certainly divine. Luckily for me, I approached the statue on the left as you enter the door, so that I first saw it from the point of view which shows it to most advantage. The timid praises which cold northern criticism ventures to bestow upon naked beauty, are not calculated to do it justice. The good faith with which I speak must warrant me in resorting to the more pictorial allowances and swelling words of the Italians. The really modest will forgive me, at all events; and I am only afraid that the prudish will be disappointed at not having enough to blame. *Hips* and *sides*, however (if they understand such words), will do. We first vulgarize our terms with a coarse imagination, and then are afraid to do justice to what they express. It was not so with our ancient admirers of beauty, the Spensers and Philip Sidneys; and they, I believe, were not worse men than ourselves. It would be difficult nowadays to convey, in English, the impression of the Italian word *fianchi* (flanks) with the requisite delicacy, in speaking of the naked human figure. We use it to mean only the sides of an army,

[<sup>1</sup> The work of Praxiteles has undoubtedly been pieced by restorations in the head, and some part of the arms; but the restoration itself is supposed to be antique.—T. H.]



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of a fortified place, or of a beast. Yet the words *rilevati fianchi* (flanks in relief) are used by the greatest Italian poets to express a beauty, eminent among all beautiful females who are not pinched and spoilt by modern fashions; and this is particularly the case with the figure which the sculptor presented to his mind in forming the Venus de' Medici. Fielding, in one of his passages about Sophia, would help me out with the rest. But to those who have seen the Venus of Canova, it is sufficient to say, that in all which constitutes the loveliness of the female figure, the Venus de' Medici is the reverse of that lank and insipid personage. Venus, above all goddesses, ought to be a woman; whereas the statue of Canova, with its straight sides and Frenchified head of hair, is the image (if of anything at all) of Fashion affecting Modesty. The finest view of the Venus de' Medici is a three-quarter one, looking towards the back of the head. Let the statue rest its fame on this. It is perfection; if, indeed, the shoulders are not a thought too broad. But the waist, and all thereunto belonging—I would quote Sir Philip Sidney at once, if I were sure I had none but an audience worthy of him. The feet are very beautiful—round, light, and tender. It is justly said, that there is no cast of the Venus which gives a proper idea of the original. Perhaps the nature of the marble is one of the reasons. It has warmth, and a polish that swims away with the eye; such as what Horace speaks of in the countenance of his mistress—

“Vultus nimium lubicrus aspici.”

“Looks too slippery to be looked upon.”—CREECH.

Alas! not so the face, nor the gesture. When I saw the *face*, all the charms of the body vanished. Thomson thought otherwise—

“Bashful she bends; her well-taught look aside  
Turns in enchanting guise, where dubious mix  
Vain conscious beauty, a dissembled sense  
Of modest shame, and slippery looks of love.  
The gazer grows enamour'd; and the stone  
As if exulting in its conquest, smiles.”



*John Keats.*  
*From a drawing by Joseph Severn.*



## FLORENCE—ITALY IN GENERAL

See the poem of *Liberty*, part the fourth. But Thomson writes like a poet who made what he went to find. I was not so lucky. I do not remember what it was that Smollett, in his morbid spleen, said of the Venus. Something, if Sterne is to be believed, not very decent. I hope I am not going to behave myself as ill. With all my admiration of Smollett and his masterly writing, I would rather err with the poetical Scotchman, than be right with the prose one; but setting aside the body (which, if Smollett said anything indecent against, I say he spoke in a manner worthy of his friend Peregrine Pickle), I must make bold to say, that I think neither the gesture of the figure modest, nor the face worthy even of the gesture. Yes; perhaps it is worthy of the gesture, for affected modesty and real want of feeling go together; and, to my mind, the expression of the face (not to mince the matter, now I must come to it) is pert, petty, insolent, and fastidious. It is the face of a foolish young woman, who thinks highly of herself, and is prepared to be sarcastic on all her acquaintance.

I cling eagerly to the supposition that the head is not an antique; and, I must add, that, if artists are warranted (as they very probably are) in deducing a necessity of the present position of the hands from the turn of the shoulders, the hands were certainly not in their present finical taste. A different character given to them would make a world of difference in the expression of the figure. It is not to be supposed that the sculptor intended to make a sophisticate pert Venus, such as nobody could admire. It is out of all probability. There is too much sentiment in the very body. On the other hand, the expression is neither graceful and good enough for the diviner aspect of the Goddess of Love, nor sufficiently festive and libertine for the other character under which she was worshipped. It might be said, that the Greek women, in consequence of the education they received, were more famous for the beauty of their persons than for the expression of their faces; that the artist, therefore, copied this peculiarity of his countrywomen; that it



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might not have been his object to excel in expression of countenance ; or that he could not, perhaps, have made a face equal to the figure, his talent not being equally turned for both. But it is said, on the other hand, that the women of Greece, owing to moral causes of some kind, were inferior to the other sex in beauty, so that artists took their models from among those of a certain licensed order, who, strange to say, were the only females that received a good education ; and certainly it is *possible* that the Venus de' Medici may have been a portrait of one of those anomalous personages. The face, however, has the very worst look of meretriciousness, which is want of feeling ; and this, we are bound to suppose, would at least have been veiled under a pleasant and more winning aspect. That it may not have been the sculptor's object to render the face worthy of the figure, it is hardly possible to conceive ; though it may be conceded that he would have found it difficult to do so, especially in marble. But the question lies, not between a figure divine and a face unequal to it, but between a figure divine and a face altogether unworthy. Apuleius has said, that if Venus herself were bald, she would no longer be Venus. It is difficult not to agree with him. And yet with much more truth might he have said, that Venus could not be Venus without attractiveness of expression. A beautiful figure is not all, nor even half. It is far more requisite to have beauty in the eyes, beauty in the smile, and that graceful and affectionate look of *approach*, or of meeting the approacher half way, which the Latins expressed by a word taken from the same root as her name, *Venustas*. The cestus was round the waist ; but what gave it its power ? Winning looks, tenderness, delightful discourse, the whole power of seduction and entertainment, such as Homer has described it, in verses rich as the girdle. Now, there is nothing of all this in the Venus de' Medici. Her face seems to vilify and to vulgarize all which her person inspires. Even the countenance of Titian's Venus, which hangs on the wall behind the statue, just over its head, as if on purpose to out-do it, succeeds in

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so doing ; and yet this naked figure, though called a Venus, is nothing more, I believe, than the portrait of somebody's mistress, not romantically delicate, and waiting till an old woman in the background brings her her clothes to get up. But not to mention that it is an excellent painting, the expression of the face is at least genuine and to the purpose, and the whole figure worthy to be adored in the temple of the Venus Pandemos, if not of the diviner one.

Upon the whole, I found the busts of the Roman emperors far more interesting than this renowned statue. Julius Cæsar leads them, with a thin face, traversed in all directions with wrinkles. I thought I had never beheld such a care-worn countenance. Such was the price he paid for ruling his happier fellow-creatures. Augustus, on the contrary, has quite a prosperous aspect,—healthy, elegant, and composed,—though, if I remember rightly, the expression was hard. You thought he could easily enough put his sign-manual to the proscription. His daughter Julia (I speak on all these points from memory) has a fat, voluptuous face, and (I think) wore a wig ; at all events, her hair was dressed in some high, artificial manner. I think also she had a double chin, though she was far from old. You could well enough fancy her letting Ovid out, at a back staircase. Somebody—Hazlitt, I think—said that the Roman emperors in this gallery had more of an ordinary English look than what we conceive of the Roman ; and, if I am not mistaken at this distance of time, I agreed with him. There was the good English look with the good, the dull with the dull, and so on. Domitian had exactly the pert aspect of a footman peering about him in a doorway. The look, however, of the glutton Vitellius was something monstrous. His face was simply vulgar, but he had a throat like that of a pelican. Nero's face it was sad to contemplate. There is a series of busts of him at different periods of his life ; one, that of a charming happy little boy ; another, that of a young man growing uneasy ; and a third, that of the miserable tyrant. You fancied that he was thinking of

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having killed his mother, and was trying to bully his conscience into no care about it.

After all, I know not whether the most interesting sight in Florence is not a little mysterious bit of something looking like parchment, which is shown you under a glass case in the principal public library. It stands pointing towards heaven, and is one of the fingers of Galileo. The hand to which it belonged is supposed to have been put to the torture by the Inquisition, for ascribing motion to the earth; and the finger is now worshipped for having proved the motion. After this, let no suffering reformer's pen misgive him. If his cause be good, justice will be done it some day.

But I must return to Maiano, in order to take leave of it for England; for the fortunes of the *Examiner*, as far as its then proprietors were concerned, had now come to their crisis;<sup>1</sup> and constant anxiety in a foreign land for the very subsistence of my family was not to be borne any longer. I need not enter into some private matters which had tended to produce this aggravation of a public result. Suffice to say, that the author's customary patron—the bookseller—enabled me to move homewards; and that I did so with joy, which almost took away half my cares.

My last day in Italy was jovial. I had a proper Bacchanalian parting with Florence. A stranger and I cracked a bottle together in high style. He ran against me with a flask of wine in his hand, and

[<sup>1</sup> The brothers became estranged in consequence of John Hunt's refusal to continue the publication of his brother's *Wishing-Cap Papers* in the *Examiner*, and also of a claim of Leigh Hunt's regarding his proprietary rights in the paper, and an arbitration case decided in favour of the later. Novello seems to have negotiated with Henry Colburn, the publisher, for a sum of money in advance for a book, to enable Hunt to return to England. Although this arrangement was made in July, 1825, Hunt's part of it was not fulfilled until the year 1828, when Colburn published *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*. Hunt was originally to have supplied his publisher with a selection from his own writings, preceded by an autobiographical sketch. The Byron section of the book was an unhappy afterthought for the author, though undoubtedly a profitable one for the publisher, as it went into a second edition the same year. (See note to p. 91).]

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divided it gloriously between us. My white waistcoat was drenched into rose colour. It was impossible to be angry with his good-humoured face; so we complimented one another on our joviality, and parted on the most flourishing terms. In the evening I cracked another flask, with equal abstinence of inside. Mr. Kirkup made me a present of a vine-stick. He came to Maiano with Brown, to take leave of us; so we christened the stick as they do a seventy-four, and he stood *rod-father*.

We set off next morning at six o'clock. I took leave of Maiano with a dry eye, Boccaccio and the Valley of Ladies notwithstanding. But the grave face of Brown (who had stayed all night, and who was to continue doing us service after we had gone, by seeing to our goods and chattels) was not so easily to be parted with. I was obliged to gulp down a sensation in the throat, such as men cannot very well afford to confess "in these degenerate days," though Achilles and old Lear made nothing of owning it.

But before I quit Italy altogether, I will describe some of our further impressions about it, both physical and moral, and general as well as particular.

You find yourself in Virgil's country the moment you see the lizards running up the walls, and hear the *cicadæ* (now *cicale*) "bursting the bushes with their song." This famous "grasshopper" of Anacreon, as the translators call it, which is not a grasshopper but a beetle, sitting on the trees, produces his "song" by scraping a hollow part of his chest with certain muscles. The noise is so loud, as well as incessant during the heats of the summer days, as to resemble that of a stocking manufactory. Travellers in Sicily declare, that while conversing with a friend along a wood, you sometimes cannot be heard for them.

All the insect tribes, good and bad, acquire vigour and size as they get southward. We found, however, but one scorpion indoors, and he was young. We were looking on him with much interest, and speculating upon his turn of mind, when a female servant quietly took out her scissors, and cut him in two. Her bile,



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with eating oil and minestra, was as much exalted as his. Scorpions, however, are no very dangerous things in Italy. The gnats are bad enough without them, and even the flies are almost as bad as the gnats. The zanzaliere (the bed-net against the gnats) appeared almost as necessary against the flies, as against the enemy from whom it is named.

But there is one insect which is equally harmless and beautiful. It succeeds the noisy cicada of an evening; and is of so fairy-like a nature and lustre, that it would be almost worth coming into the south to look at it, if there were no other attraction. I allude to the fire-fly. Imagine thousands of flashing diamonds every night powdering the ground, the trees, and the air, especially in the darkest places, and in the corn-fields. They give at once a delicacy and brilliance to Italian darkness, inconceivable. It is the glow-worm winged, and flying in crowds. In England it is the female alone that can be said to give light; that of the male, who is the exclusive possessor of the wings, is hardly perceptible. "Worm" is a wrong word, the creature being a real insect. The Tuscan name is *lucciola*, little-light. In Genoa they call them *cæe-belle* (*chiare-belle*), clear and pretty. When held in the hand, the little creature is discovered to be a dark-coloured beetle, but without the hardness or sluggish look of the beetle tribe. The light is contained in the under part of the extremity of the abdomen, exhibiting a dull golden-coloured section by day, and flashing occasionally by daylight, especially when the hand is shaken. At night the flashing is that of the purest and most lucid fire, spangling the vineyards and olive-trees, and their dark avenues, with innumerable stars. Its use is not known. In England, and I believe here, the supposition is that it is a signal of love. It affords no perceptible heat, but is supposed to be phosphoric. In a dark room a single one is sufficient to flash a light against the wall. I have read of a lady in the West Indies who could see to read by the help of three under a glass, as long as they chose to accommodate her. During our abode in Genoa a few of them were com-

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monly in our rooms all night, going about like little sparkling elves. It is impossible not to think of something spiritual in seeing the progress of one of them through a dark room. You only know it by the flashing of its lamp which takes place every two or three feet apart, sometimes oftener, thus marking its track in and out of the apartment, or about it. It is like a little fairy taking its rounds. These insects remind us of the lines in Herrick, inviting his mistress to come to him at night-time, and they suit them still better than his English ones :—

“Their lights the glow-worms lend thee;  
The shooting-stars attend thee;  
And the elves also,  
Whose little eyes glow,  
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.”<sup>1</sup>

To me, who when I was in Italy passed more of my time, even than usual, in the ideal world, the spiritual-looking little creatures were more than commonly interesting. Shelley used to watch them for hours. I looked at them, and wondered whether any of the particles he left upon earth helped to animate their loving and lovely light. The last fragment he wrote, which was a welcome to me on my arrival from England, began with a simile taken from their dusk look, and the fire underneath it, in which he found a likeness to his friend. They had then just made their appearance for the season.

There is one circumstance respecting these fire-flies, quite as extraordinary as any. There is no mention of them in the ancient poets. Now, of all insects, even southern, they are, perhaps, the most obvious to poetical notice. It is difficult to conceive how any poet, much more a pastoral or an amatory poet, could help speaking of them; and yet they make their appearance neither in Greek nor Latin verse, neither in Homer, nor Virgil, nor Ovid, nor Anacreon, nor Theocritus. The earliest mention of them, with which I am acquainted, is in Dante (*Inferno*, canto 21), where he

<sup>1</sup> [Herrick's *The Night-Piece to Julia*: “Her Eyes the glow-worm lend thee” etc. verse 1.]

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compares the spirits in the eighth circle of hell, who go about swathed in fire, to the "lucciole" in a rural valley of an evening. A truly saturnine perversion of a beautiful object. Does nature put forth a new production now and then, like an author? Or has the glow-worm been exalted into the fire-fly by the greater heat of the modern Italian soil, which appears indisputable? The supposition is, I believe, that the fire-fly was brought into Europe from the New World.

With respect to wood in Italy, olive-trees in particular, travellers hearing so much of the latter, and accustomed to their pickled fruit, are generally disappointed at sight of them. Whether my enthusiasm was borne out by judgment, I cannot say, but I liked them at least in combination. An olive-tree by itself is hardly to be called handsome, unless it is young, in which state it is very much so, quite warranting Homer's comparison with it of the slain youth. It is then tender-looking and elegant. When old the leaves are stiff, hard, pointed, willow-like, dark above, and of a light leathern colour underneath; the trunk slight, dry-looking, crooked; and it almost always branches off into a double stem at a little distance from the ground. A wood of olive-trees looks like a huge hazy bush, more light than dark, and glimmering with innumerable specks, which are the darker sides of the leaves. When they are in fruit they seem powdered with myriads of little black balls. My wife said, that olive-trees looked as if they only grew by moonlight; which gives a better idea of their light, faded aspect, than a more prosaical description.

The pine-tree is tall, dark, and comparatively branchless, till it spreads at top into a noble, solid-looking head, wide and stately. It harmonizes as beautifully with extended landscape, as architectural towers, or as ships at sea.

The cypress is a poplar in shape, but more sombre, stately, and heavy; not to be moved by every flippant air. It is of a beautiful dark colour, and contrasts admirably with trees of a rounder figure. Two or

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three cypress-trees by the side of a white or yellow cottage, slated and windowed like our new cottage-houses near London, the windows often without glass, are alone sufficient to form a Tuscan picture, and constantly remind you that you are at a distance from home.

The consumption, by the way, of olive oil is immense. It is probably no mean exasperator of Italian bile. The author of an Italian *Art of Health* approves a moderate use of it, both in diet and medicine; but says, that as soon as it is cooked, fried, or otherwise abused, it inflames the blood, disturbs the humours, irritates the fibres, and produces other effects very superfluous in a stimulating climate. The notoriousness of the abuse makes him cry out, and ask how much better it would be to employ this pernicious quantity of oil in lighting the streets and roads. He thinks it necessary, however, to apologize to his countrymen for this apparent inattention to their pecuniary profits, adding, that he makes amends by diverting them into another channel. I fear the two ledgers would make a very different show of profit and loss: not to mention, that unless the oil were consecrated, or the lamps hung very high, it would assuredly be devoured. We had no little difficulty in keeping the servants from disputing its food with our lamp-light. Their lucubrations were of a more internal nature than ours.

“The rather thou,  
Celestial oil shine inwards.”

I was told that the olive-trees grew finer and finer as you went southwards.

The chestnut-trees are very beautiful; the spiky-looking branches of leaves, long, and of a noble-green, make a glorious show as you look up against the intense blue of the sky. Is it a commonplace to say that the *castanets* used in dancing, evidently originated in the nuts of this tree, *castagnette*? They are made in general, I believe, of cockle-shells, or an imitation of them; but the name renders their vegetable descent unequivocal. It is pleasant to observe the simple



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origin of pleasant things. Some loving peasants, time immemorial, fall dancing under the trees: they pick up the nuts, rattle them in their hands; and behold (as the Frenchman says) the birth of the accompaniment of the fandango.

Thus much for insects and trees. Among the human novelties that impress a stranger in Italy, I have not before noticed the vivacity prevalent among all classes of people. The gesticulation is not French. It has an air of greater simplicity and sincerity, and has more to do with the eyes and expression of countenance. But after being used to it, the English must look like a nation of scorners and prudes. When serious, the women walk with a certain piquant stateliness the same which impressed the ancient as well as modern poets of Italy, Virgil in particular; but it has no haughtiness. You might imagine them walking up to a dance, or priestesses of Venus approaching a temple. When lively, their manner out of doors is that of our liveliest women within. If they make a quicker movement than usual, if they recognize a friend, for instance, or call out to somebody, or despatch somebody with a message, they have all the life, simplicity, and unconsciousness of the happiest of our young women, who are at ease in their gardens or parks.

On becoming intimate with Genoa, I found that it possesses multitudes of handsome women; and what surprised me, many of them with beautiful northern complexions. But an English lady told me, that for this latter discovery I was indebted to my short sight. This is probable. I have often, I confess, been in raptures at faces that have passed me in London, whose only faults were being very coarse and considerably bilious. It is not desirable, however, to have a Brobdignagian sight; and where the mouth is sweet and the eyes intelligent, there is always the look of beauty with a right observer. Now, I saw heaps of such faces in Genoa. The superiority of the women over the men was indeed remarkable, and is to be accounted for perhaps by the latter being wrapt and

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screwed up in money-getting. Yet it is just the reverse, I understand, at Naples; and the Neapolitans are accused of being as sharp at a bargain as anybody. What is certain, however, is, that in almost all parts of Italy, gentility of appearance is on the side of the females. The rarity of a gentlemanly look in the men is remarkable. The commonness of it among women of all classes is equally so. The former was certainly not the case in old times, if we are to trust the portraits handed down to us; nor, indeed, could it easily have been believed, if left upon record. What is the cause, then, of this extraordinary degeneracy? Is it, after all, an honourable one to the Italians? Is it that the men, thinking of the moral and political situation of their country, and so long habituated to feel themselves degraded, acquire a certain instinctive carelessness and contempt of appearance; while the women, on the other hand, more taken up with their own affairs, with the consciousness of beauty, and the flattery which is more or less paid them, have retained a greater portion of their self-possession and esteem? The alteration, whatever it is owing to, is of the worst kind. The want of gentility is not supplied, as it so often is with us, by a certain homely simplicity and manliness, quite as good in its way, and better, where the former does not include the better part of it. The appearance, to use a modern cant phrase, has a certain *raffishness* in it, like that of a suspicious-looking fellow in England, who lounges about with his hat on one side, and a flower in his mouth. Nor is it confined to men in trade, whether high or low; though at the same time I must observe, that all men, high or low (with the exceptions, of course, that take place in every case), are given to pinching and saving, keeping their servants upon the lowest possible allowance, and eating as little as need be themselves, with the exception of their favourite *minestra*, of which I will speak presently, and which being a cheap as well as favourite dish, they gobble in sufficient quantity to hinder their abstinence in other things from being regarded as the effect of temperance. In Pisa, the great good of life was a hot supper; but at

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Pisa and Genoa both, as in "the city" with us, if you overheard anything said in the streets, it was generally about money. *Quatrini, soldi, and lire*, were discussing at every step. A stranger, full of the Italian poets and romances, is surprised to find the southern sunshine teeming with this northern buzz. One thinks sometimes that men would not know what to do with their time, if it were not for that succession of hopes and fears, which constitutes the essence of trade. It looks like a good-humoured invention of nature to save the major part of mankind from getting tired to death with themselves; but, in truth, it is a necessity of progression. All mankind must be fused together, before they know how to treat one another properly, and to agree upon final good. Prince Albert's project for next year<sup>1</sup> is a great lift in this direction. It was a most happy thought for combining the ordinary and extraordinary interests of the world.

One of the greatest causes of the deterioration of the modern Italian character, has been the chicanery, sensuality, falsehood, worldliness, and petty feeling of all sorts, exhibited by the Court of Rome. Mazzini has denounced it in eloquence, of which the earth has not yet seen the result; however extraordinary its consequences have been already in the events at Rome. But the same things were talked of when I was in Italy, and the truth very freely uttered.

The Italians owned, that for centuries they had been accustomed to see the most exalted persons among them, and a *sacred* court, full of the pettiest and most selfish vices; that while they had instinctively lost their respect for those persons, they had, nevertheless, beheld them the most flourishing of their countrymen; and that they had been taught, by their example, to make such a distinction between belief and practice, as would startle the saving grace of the most lawless of Calvinists. From what I saw myself (and I would not

<sup>1</sup> The first Crystal Palace. [What is now known as the International Exhibition of 1851.]

[The remark was written in 1850, and it is difficult to correct it without altering the context.—T. H.]

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mention it, if it had not been corroborated by others who resided in Italy for years) there was a prevailing contempt of truth in the country, that would have astonished even an oppressed Irishman. It formed an awful comment upon those dangers of *catechizing* people into insincerity, which Bentham pointed out in his *Church of Englandism*. We in England are far enough, God knows, from this universality of evil yet; and some of the most conscientious of our clergy themselves have lately been giving remarkable indication of their disinterested horror on the subject. May such writers, and such readers of them, always be found to preserve us from it! In Shelley's preface to the tragedy of the *Cenci*,<sup>1</sup> which was written at Rome, the religious nature of this profanation of truth is pointed out with equal acuteness and eloquence. I have heard instances of falsehood, not merely in shops, but among "ladies and gentlemen," so extreme, so childish, and apparently so unconscious of wrong, that the very excess of it, however shocking in one respect, relieved one's feelings

[<sup>1</sup> *The Cenci, a Tragedy in Five Acts*. By Percy B. Shelley. Printed in Italy, 1819. The epistolary dedication "To Leigh Hunt, Esq.," dated Rome, May 29, 1819, contains a fine expression of admiration for Hunt's qualities. The passage in the *Preface* referred to above is the following:—"To a protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and man which pervade the tragedy of the *Cenci*. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion, with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion co-exists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connexion with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith, confess himself so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion or persuasion, an excuse, a refuge: never a check. *Cenci* himself built a chapel in the court of his palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle and established masses for the peace of his soul."]



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in another. It showed how much might be done by proper institutions, to exalt the character of a people who are by nature so ingenuous. But received Italian virtues, under their present governments, consist in being Catholics (that is to say, in going to confession), in not being "taken in" by others, and in taking in everybody else. Persons employed to do the least or the greatest jobs, will alike endeavour to cheat you through thick and thin. Such, at least, was the case when I was in Italy. It was a perpetual warfare, in which you were obliged to fight in self-defence. If you paid anybody what he asked you, it never entered into his imagination that you did it from anything but folly. You were pronounced a *minchione* (a ninny), one of their greatest terms of reproach. On the other hand, if you battled well through the bargain, a perversion of the natural principle of self-defence led to a feeling of respect for you. Dispute might increase; the man might grin, stare, threaten; might pour out torrents of argument and of "injured innocence," as they always do; but be firm, and he went away equally angry and admiring. Did anybody condescend to take them in, the admiration as well as the anger was still in proportion, like that of the gallant knights of old when they were beaten in single combat.

The famous order of things called *Cicisbeism* is the consequence of a state of society more inconsistent than itself, though less startling to the habits of the world; but it was managed in a foolish manner; and, strange to say, it was almost as gross, more formal, and quite as hypocritical as what it displaced. It is a stupid system. The poorer the people, the less, of course, it takes place among them; but as the husband, in all cases, has the most to do for his family, and is the person least cared for, he is resolved to get what he can before marriage; so a vile custom prevails among the poorest, by which no girl can get married unless she brings a certain dowry. Unmarried females are also watched with exceeding strictness; and in order to obtain at once a husband and freedom, every nerve is strained to get this important dowry.

Daughters scrape up, servants pilfer for it. If they were not obliged to ornament themselves, as a help towards their object, I do not know whether even the natural vanity of youth would not be sacrificed, and girls hang out rags as a proof of their hoard, instead of the "outward and visible sign" of crosses and earrings. Dress, however, disputes the palm with saving; and as a certain consciousness of their fine eyes and their natural graces survives everything else among southern womankind, English people have no conception of the high hand with which the humblest females in Italy carry it at a dance or an evening party. Hair dressed up, white gowns, satins, flowers, fans, and gold ornaments, all form a part of the glitter of the evening, and all, too, amidst as great, and perhaps as graceful a profusion of compliments and love-making as takes place in the most privileged ball-rooms. Yet it is twenty to one that nine out of ten persons in the room have dirty stockings on, and shoes out at heel. Nobody thinks of saving up articles of that description; and they are too useful, and not showy enough, to be cared for *en passant*. Therefore Italian girls may often enough be well compared to flowers; with head and bodies all ornament, their feet are in the earth; and thus they go nodding forth for sale, "growing, blowing, and all alive." A foolish English servant whom we brought out with us, fell into an absolute rage of jealousy at seeing my wife give a crown of flowers to a young Italian servant, who was going to a dance. The latter, who was of the most respectable sort, and looked as lady-like as you please when dressed, received the flowers with gratitude, though without surprise; but English and Italian both were struck speechless, when, in addition to the crown, my wife presented the latter with a pair of her own shoes and stockings. Doubtless, they were the triumph of the evening. Next day we heard accounts of the beautiful dancing;—of Signor F., the English valet, opening the ball with the handsome chandler's-shop-keeper, etc.; and our poor countrywoman was ready to expire.

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One anti-climax more. If Italy is famous at present for any two things, it is for political uneasiness and *minestra*.<sup>1</sup> Wherever you find shops, you see baskets full of a yellow stuff, made up in long strips like tape, and tied up in bundles. This is the main compound of *minestra*, or, to use the Neapolitan term, it is our now growing acquaintance, *maccaroni*. Much of it is naturally of a yellowish colour, but the Genoese dye it deeper with saffron. When made into a soup it is called *minestra*, and mixed sometimes with meat, sometimes with oil and butter, but always, if it is to be had, with grated cheese. An Italian, reasonably to do in the world, has no notion of eating anything plain. If he cannot have his bit of roast and boiled, and, above all, his *minestra* and his oil, he is thrown out of all his calculations, physical and moral. He has a great abstract respect for fasting; but he struggles hard to be relieved from it. He gets, whenever he can, what is called an "indulgence." The Genoese in particular, being but Canaanites or borderers in Italy, and accustomed to profane intercourse by their maritime situation, as well as to an heterodox appetite by their industry and sea air, are extremely restive on the subject of fasting. They make pathetic representations to the Archbishop respecting beef and pudding, and allege their health and their household economies. Fish is luckily dear. I have seen in a Genoese Gazette, an extract from the circular of the Archbishop respecting the Lent indulgences. "The Holiness of our Lord," he says (for so the Pope is styled), "has seen with the greatest displeasure, that the ardent desire which he has always cherished, of restoring the ancient rigour of Lent, is again rendered of no effect by representations which he finds it impossible to resist." He therefore permits the inhabitants of the Archbishop's diocese to make "one meal a day of eggs and white-meats (*latticini*)

<sup>1</sup> I used to think that *cicisbeism* was its main distinction; but young Italy insists that it is going out of fashion; and, as Italians ought to know more about the subject than I do, I shall not let certain spectacles that were shown me in their country, pretend to refute it.

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during Lent; and to such persons as have really need of it, he allows the use of flesh:" but he adds, that this latter permission "leaves a heavy load on his conscience," and that he positively forbids the promiscuous use of flesh and fish. I must add, for my part, I thought the Pope had reason in this roasting of eggs.

As to the political uneasiness, I should have so much to say about it, if I entered upon the subject, that I dare but occasionally allude to it in this volume. It would require a book to itself. The whole of this volume, however, may be said to be about it, inasmuch as it concerns the transition state of the human mind. I shall advert again to the religious part of the subject before I conclude.

Meantime, I shall only say that Italy is a wonderful nation, always at the head of the world in some respects, great or small, and equally full of life.<sup>1</sup> Division among its children is its bane; and Mazzini's was the best note that has been struck in its favour in modern times, because he struck it at Rome, in the place of the very Pope, and thus gave it the best chance of rallying under one summons. Heaven forgive the French for the shameless vanity of their interference! for it has delayed, under the most unwarrantable circumstances, what must assuredly take place before long, as far as priests and priestly government are concerned. The poor good Pope can no more keep it down, than he could tread out a volcano with his embroidered slippers.

I differ with Mazzini, inasmuch as I prefer a republic under a limited monarch, to a republic without one. It seems to me to promise better for order and refinement, and for the security, against reactions, of progression itself. Still I should have rejoiced to see his noble experiment at Rome completed: for the throne which he and his compeers occupied, and from which, in accordance with his own awful words, he had made

[<sup>1</sup> Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) established the "Young Italy" party in 1831, the year in which Gregory XVI. succeeded Pius VIII. Towards the end of 1847, Mazzini addressed a letter of "counsel" to Pius IX., on his accession to the Papal throne.



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falsehood descend,<sup>1</sup> was occupied by justice and reason, and infamous was the intervention that broke it up. But if poor, divided, and still in great measure (as far as the uneducated classes are concerned) priest-ridden Italy is not yet strong enough or worthy enough to complete an experiment so noble, then the best thing to be desired is, that the gallant king of Sardinia should succeed with his constitutional experiment, which would end in something far better than absolutism of any kind, and might ultimately crown republicanism itself with the superior grace and security, of which mention has just been made.

### CHAPTER XXII

#### RETURN TO ENGLAND

[SEPTEMBER 10—OCTOBER 14, 1825]

ON our return from Italy to England, we travelled not by post, but by *vettura*, that is to say, by easy stages of thirty or forty miles a day, in a travelling carriage; the box of which is turned into a chaise, with a calash over it. It is drawn by three horses, occasionally assisted by mules. We paid about eighty-two guineas English, for which some ten of us (counting as six, because of the children,) were to be taken to Calais; to have a breakfast and dinner every day on the road; to be provided with five beds at night, each containing two persons; and to rest four days during the journey, without further expense, in whatever places and portions of time we thought fit. Our breakfast was to consist of coffee, bread, fruit, milk, and eggs (plenty of each), and our dinner of the four indispensable Italian dishes, something roast, something boiled, something fried, and what they call an *umido*, which is a hash, or something of that sort; together with vegetables, wine, and fruit. Care, however, must be taken in these bargains, that the *vetturino*

<sup>1</sup> "YOU ARE A LIE: DESCEND!"—*Mazzini to the Papal Power.*

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does not crib from the allowance by degrees, otherwise the dishes grow fewer and smaller ; meat disappears on a religious principle, it being *magro* day, on which "nothing is to be had ;" and the vegetables, adhering to their friend the meat in his adversity, disappear likewise. The reason of this is, that the vetturino has two conflicting interests within him. It is his interest to please you in hope of other custom ; and it is his interest to make the most of the sum of money which his master allows him for expenses. Withstand, however, any change at first, and good behaviour may be reckoned upon. We had as pleasant a little Tuscan to drive us as I ever met with. He began very handsomely ; but finding us willing to make the best of any little deficiency, he could not resist the temptation of giving up the remoter interest for the nearer one. We found our profusion diminish accordingly ; and at Turin, after cunningly asking us whether we cared to have an inn not of the very highest description, he brought us to one, of which it could only be said that it was not of the very lowest. The landlord showed us into sordid rooms on a second story. I found it necessary to be base and make a noise ; upon which little Gigi looked frightened, and the landlord became slavish, and bowed us into his best apartments. We had no more of the same treatment.

Our rogue of a driver had an excellent temper, and was as honest a rogue, I will undertake to say, as ever puzzled a formalist. He made us laugh with his resemblance to Lamb, whose countenance, a little jovialized, he engrafted upon an active little body and sturdy pair of legs, walking about in his jack-boots as if they were pumps. But a man must have some great object in life, to carry him so many times over the Alps : and this, of necessity, is money. We could have dispensed easily enough with some of the fried and roasted ; but to do this would have been to subject ourselves to other diminutions. Our bargain was reckoned a good one. Gigi's master said (believe him who will) that he could not have afforded it, had he not been sure, at that time of the year, that somebody

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would take his coach back again; such is the multitude of persons that come to winter in Italy.

We were told to look for a barren road from Florence to Bologna, but were agreeably disappointed. The vines, indeed, and the olives disappeared; but this was a relief to us. Instead of these, and the comparatively petty ascents about Florence, we had proper swelling Apennines, valley and mountain, with fine sloping meadows of green, interspersed with wood.

[Starting from Maiano at an early hour on the 10th of September, 1825,] we stopped to refresh ourselves at noon at an inn called *Le Maschere*, where there was an elegant prospect, a mixture of nature with garden ground; and we slept at *Covigliaio*, where three tall buxom damsels waited upon us, who romped during supper with the men-servants. One of them had a better tone in speaking than the others, upon the strength of which she stepped about with a jaunty air in a hat and feathers, and "did the amiable." A Greek came in with a long beard, which he poked into all the rooms by way of investigation, as he could speak no language but his own. I asked one of the girls why she looked so frightened; upon which she shrugged her shoulders and said "*Oh Dio!*" as if Bluebeard had come to put her in his *seraglio*.

Our vile inn knocked us up; and we were half-starved. Little *Gigi*, on being remonstrated with, said that he was not aware till that moment of its being part of his duty, by the agreement, to pay expenses during our days of stopping. He had not looked into the agreement till then! The rogue! So we lectured him, and forgave him for his good temper; and he was to be very honest and expensive for the rest of the journey.

Next morning we set off at five o'clock, and passed a volcanic part of the Apennines, where a flame issues from the ground. We thought we saw it. The place is called *Pietra Mala* (Evil Rock). Here we enter upon the Pope's territories; as if his Holiness were to be approached by an infernal door.

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We refreshed at Poggioli, in sight of a church upon a hill, called, the Monte dei Formicoli (Ant Hill). Sitting outside the inn-door on a stone, while the postilion sat on another, he told us of an opinion which prevailed among travellers respecting this place. They reported, that on a certain day in the year, all the ants in the neighbourhood come to church in the middle of the service, and die during the celebration of the mass. After giving me this information, I observed him glancing at me for some time with a very serious face, when he said abruptly, "Do you believe this report, signore?" I told him, that I was loath to differ with what he or any one else might think it proper to believe; but if he put the question to me as one to be sincerely answered—

"Oh, certainly, signore."

"Well, then, I do not believe it."

"No more," said little Gigi, "do I."

I subsequently found my postilion very sceptical on some highly Catholic points, and he accounted for it like a philosopher. Seeing that he made no sign of reverence in passing the images of the Virgin and Child, I asked him the reason.

"Sir," said he "I have travelled."

These were literally his words. (Ho viaggiato, signore.) He manifested, however, no disrespect for opinions on which most believers are agreed; though whenever his horses vexed him, he poured forth a series of the most blasphemous execrations which I ever heard. Indeed, I had never heard any at all resembling them; though I was told they were not uncommon with persons unquestionably devout. He abused the Divine presence in the sacrament. He execrated the body and—but I must not repeat what he said, for fear of shocking the reader and myself. Nevertheless, I believe he did it all in positive innocence and want of thought, repeating the words as mere words which he heard from others all his life, and to which he attached none of the ideas which they expressed. When a person d—ns another in English, he has no real notion of what he condemns him to; and



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I believe our postilion had as little when he devoted the objects of his worship to malediction. He was very kind to the children, and took leave of us at the end of our journey in tears.

The same evening we got to Bologna, where we finished for the present with mountains. The best streets in Bologna are furnished with arcades, very sensible things, which we are surprised to miss in any city in a hot country. They are to be found, more or less, as you travel northwards. The houses were all kept in good-looking order, owing, I believe, to a passion which the Bolognese have for a gorgeous anniversary, against which everything, animate and inanimate, puts on its best. I could not learn what it was. Besides tapestry and flowers, they bring out their pictures to hang in front of the houses. Many cities in Italy disappoint the eye of the traveller. The stucco and plaster outside the houses get worn, and, together with the open windows, gives them a squalid and deserted appearance. But the name is always something. If Bologna were nothing of a city, it would still be a fine sound and a sentiment; a thing recorded in art, in poetry, in stories of all sorts.

We passed next day over a flat country, and dined at Modena, which is neither so good-looking a city, nor so well sounding a recollection as Bologna; but it is still Modena, the native place of Tassoni. I went to the cathedral to get sight of the *Bucket* (La Secchia) which is hung up there, but found the door shut, and a very ugly pile of building. The lions before the doors looked as if some giant's children had made them in sport; wretchedly sculptured, and gaped as if in agony at their bad legs. It was a disappointment to me not to see the Bucket. The poem called the *Rape of the Bucket* (La Secchia Rapita), next to Metastasio's address to Venus, is my oldest Italian acquaintance;<sup>1</sup> and I reckoned upon saying to the

<sup>1</sup> What appears to be the earliest mention of Tassoni's name by Hunt, occurs in a letter addressed to Mr. Hunter in Jan., 1805. He here speaks of an *Essay on Heroi-Comic Poetry* in which he had "ventured to insert a sort of memoir and criticism on the *Rape of the Bucket* (La Secchia Rapita) of Tassoni, who was the

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subject of it, "Ha, ha! There you are!" Pope imitated the title of this poem in his *Rape of the Lock*; and Dryden confessed to a young critic, that he himself knew the poem, and had made use of it. The bucket was a trophy taken by the Modenese from their rivals of Bologna, during one of the petty Italian wars.

There is something provoking, and yet something fine too, in flitting in this manner from city to city. You are vexed at not being able to stop and see pictures, etc.; but you have a sort of royal taste of great pleasures in passing. The best thing one can do to get at the interior of anything in this hurry, is to watch the countenances of the people. I thought that the aspects of the Bolognese and Modenese people singularly answered to their character in books. What is more singular, is the extraordinary difference and nationality of aspect in the people of two cities, at so little distance from one another. The Bolognese have a broad steady look, not without geniality and richness. You can imagine them to give birth to painters. The Modenese are crusty-looking and carking, with a narrow mouth, and a dry twinkle at the corner of the eyes. They are critics and satirists on the face of them. For my part, I never took very kindly to Tassoni, for all my young acquaintance with him; and in the war which he has celebrated, I was henceforward, whatever I was before, decidedly for the Bolognese.

On the 12th of September, after dining at Modena, we slept at Reggio, where Ariosto was born. His father was captain of the citadel. Boiardo, the poet's worthy precursor (in some respects, I think, his sur-

inventor of this species of composition. I have examined, I believe" (he continues), "the best Italian critics who have mentioned this celebrated wit, and diligently perused to the best of my ability the poem itself, which has infinitely amused me; but as I greatly mistrust my researches into a language, which to say the most of my powers, I understand but imperfectly, I should think myself favoured, if Mr. Damiani would look over my manuscript, and just touch with his pen any false criticism or conclusions into which my ignorance may have led me." The volume of *Critical Essays on the London Theatres*, 1807, also contains a quotation from Tassoni with a note.]

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passer), was born at Scandiano, not far off. I ran, before the gates were shut, to get a look at the citadel, and was much the better for not missing it. Poets leave a greater charm than any men upon places they have rendered famous, because they sympathise more than any other men with localities, and identify themselves with the least beauty of art or nature—a turret or an old tree. The river Ilissus at Athens is found to be a sorry brook; but it runs talking for ever of Plato and Sophocles.

At Parma I tore my hair mentally at not being able to see the Correggios. Piacenza pleased us to be in it, on account of the name; but a list of places in Italy is always like a set of musical tones. Parma, Piacenza, Voghèra, Tortôna, Felizàna,—sounds like these convert a road-book into a music-book.

At Asti, a pretty place, with a “west-end” full of fine houses, I went to look at the Alfieri palace, and tried to remember the poet with pleasure; but I could not like him. To me, his austerity is only real in the unpleasantest part of it. The rest seems affected. The human heart in his hands is a tough business; and he thumps and turns it about in his short violent, and pounding manner, as if it were an iron on a blacksmith’s anvil. Alfieri loved liberty like a tyrant, and the Pretender’s widow like a slave.

The first sight of the Po, of the mulberry-trees, the meadows, and the Alps, was at once classical, and Italian, and northern. It made us feel that we were taking a great step nearer home. Poirino, a pretty little place, presented us with a sight like a passage in Boccaccio. This was a set of Dominican friars, with the chief at their head, issuing out of two coaches, and proceeding along the corridor of the inn to dinner, each holding a bottle of wine in his hand, with the exception of the abbot, who held two. The wine was doubtless their own, that upon the road not being sufficiently orthodox.

Turin is a noble city, like a set of Regent-streets, made twice as tall. We found here some of the most military-looking officers we ever saw, fine, tall, hand-

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some fellows, whom the weather had beaten but not conquered, very gentlemanly, and combining the officer and soldier as completely as could be wished. They had served under Bonaparte. When I saw them, I could understand how it was that a Piedmontese revolution was more dreaded by the legitimates than any other movement in Italy. The one concocted at that time was betrayed by the heir-apparent, then Prince of Carignan, who undertook to make amends by his heading another, as King Charles Albert. A second was lost not long ago. Suspicion still clung to him during the vicissitudes of the war; but a death, looking very much like a broken heart, appears to have restored his memory to respect, and his son has made great and promising moves in the right direction.<sup>1</sup>

At Turin was the finest dancer I had ever seen, a girl of the name of De' Martini. She united the agility of the French school with all that you would expect from the Italian. Italian dancers are in general as mediocre

<sup>1</sup> [In this passage there is a very grave mistake, and none the less serious for being apparently countenanced by so conscientious a writer. The allusion to a betrayal of a liberal movement by Charles Albert in his youth, is based on an entirely false report. Charles Albert had joined the party of the Carbonari, and had suddenly withdrawn from them, but it was on grounds frankly stated, consistent with his own professions, and with the avowedly monarchical principles of the present volume. The Carbonari originally formed their combination to free their race from tyranny, and to restore Italy to the Italians. Charles Albert went with them; but when they enlarged their project and planned the establishment of a republic, he declared that he could not adopt republican principles, and he withdrew from the movement. The movement was defeated, but there is not the slightest evidence that Charles Albert, by deed or word, suggestion or silence, ever betrayed his former comrades. He afterwards endured great trouble of mind and sickness of body from the disappointment of his hopes and, it is understood, doubts whether he was perfectly justified in opposing the Church. When opportunity again offered itself, Charles Albert again stood forward, and staked his throne in the national cause. When he found that his presence embarrassed the endeavours of the constitutional party, he spontaneously surrendered his throne, and doomed himself to die in exile, leaving his son, his companion in the field and in council, to carry on the enterprise with happier auspices. Charles Albert proved at once the bitterness of the sacrifice which he voluntarily incurred and his devotion to Italy, by ordering on his deathbed that his heart should be carried back to the beloved land.—T. H.]



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as the French are celebrated; but the French dancers, in spite of their high notions of the art and the severity of their studies (perhaps that is the reason), have no mind with their bodies. They are busts in barbers' shops, stuck upon legs full of vivacity. You wonder how any lower extremities so lively can leave such an absence of all expression in the upper. De' Martini was a dancer all over. Her countenance partook of the felicity of the limbs. When she came bounding on the stage, in two or three long leaps like a fawn, I should have thought she was a French-woman; but the style undeceived me. She came bounding in front, as if she would have pitched herself into the arms of the pit; then made a sudden drop, and addressed three enthusiastic courtesies to the pit and boxes, with a rapidity and yet a grace, a self-abandonment yet a self-possession, quite extraordinary, and such as, to do justice to it, should be described by a poet combining the western ideas of the sex with eastern license. She was beautiful, too, both in face and figure, and I thought was a proper dancer to appear before a pit full of those fine fellows I have just mentioned. She seemed as complete in her way as themselves. In short, I never saw anything like it before, and did not wonder that she had the reputation of turning peoples' heads wherever she went.

At Sant' Ambrogio, a little town between Turin and Susa, is a proper castle-topped mountain *à la Radcliffe*, the only one we had met with. Susa has some remains connected with Augustus; but Augustus is nobody, or ought to be nobody, to a traveller in modern Italy. He, and twenty like him, never gave me one sensation all the time I was there; and even the better part of the Romans it is difficult to think of. There is something formal and cold about their history, in spite of Virgil and Horace and even in spite of their own violence, which does not harmonize with the south. They are men in northern iron, and their poets, even the best of them, were copiers of the Greek poets, not originals, like Dante and Petrarch. So we slept at Susa, not thinking of

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Augustus, but listening to waterfalls, and thinking of the Alps.

Next morning we beheld a sight worth living for. We were now ascending the Alps; and while yet in the darkness before dawn, we beheld the top of one of the mountains basking in the sunshine. We took it with delighted reverence into our souls, and there it is for ever. The passage of the Alps (thanks to Bonaparte, whom a mountaineer, with brightness in his eyes, called "Napoleon of happy memory,"—*Napoleone di felice memoria*) is now as easy as a road in England. You look up towards airy galleries and down upon villages that appear like toys, and feel somewhat disappointed at rolling over it all so easily.

The moment we passed the Alps, we found ourselves in France. At Lanslebourg, French was spoken, and amorous groups gesticulated on the papering and curtains. Savoy is a glorious country, a wonderful intermixture of savage precipices and pastoral meads; but the roads are still uneven and bad. The river ran and tumbled, as if in a race with our tumbling carriage. At one time you are in a road like a gigantic rut, deep down in a valley; and at another, up in the air, wheeling along a precipice I know not how many times as high as St. Paul's. ✓

At Chambéry, I could not resist going to see the house of Rousseau and Madame de Warens, while the coach stopped. It is up a beautiful lane, where you have trees all the way, sloping fields, and a brook; as fit a scene as could be desired. I met some Germans coming away, who congratulated me on being bound, as they had been, to the house of "Jean Jacques." The house itself is of the humbler genteel class, but neat and white, with green blinds. The little chapel, that cost its mistress so much, is still remaining.

We proceeded, through Lyons and Auxerre, to Paris. Beyond Lyons, we met on the road the statue of Louis XIV. going to that city to overawe it with Bourbon memories. It was an equestrian statue, covered up, guarded with soldiers, and looking

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on that road like some mysterious heap. Don Quixote would have attacked it, and not been thought mad: so much has romance done for us. The natives would infallibly have looked quietly on. There was a riot about it at Lyons, soon after its arrival. I had bought in that city a volume of the songs of Béranger, and I thought to myself, as I met the statue, "I have a little book in my pocket, which will not suffer you to last long." And, surely enough, down it went; for down went King Charles.<sup>1</sup>

Statues rise and fall; but a little on the other side of Lyons, our postilion exclaimed, "Monte Bianco!" and turning round, I beheld for the first time, Mont Blanc, which had been hidden from us, when near it, by a fog. It looked like a turret in the sky, amber-coloured, golden, belonging to the wall of some ethereal world. This, too, is in our memories for ever,—an addition to our stock,—a light for memory to turn to, when it wishes a beam upon its face.

At Paris we could stop but two days, and I had but two thoughts in my head; one of the Revolution, the other of the times of Molière and Boileau. Accordingly I looked about for the Sorbonne, and went to see the place where the guillotine stood;—the place where thousands of spirits underwent the last pang of mortality; many guilty, many innocent, but all the victims of a re-action against tyranny, such as will never let tyranny be what it was, unless a convulsion of nature should swallow up knowledge, and make the world begin over again. These are the thoughts that enable us to bear such sights, and that serve to secure what we hope for.

Paris, besides being a beautiful city in the quarter that strangers most look to, the Tuileries, Quai de Voltaire, etc., delights the eye of a man of letters by the multitude of its book-stalls. There seemed to be a want of old books; but the new were better than the shoal of *Missals* and *Lives of the Saints* that disappoint the lover of duodecimos on the stalls of

[<sup>1</sup> Charles X. succeeded Louis XVIII. in 1824, and abdicated in 1830.]

## RETURN TO ENGLAND

Italy; and the Rousseaus and Voltaires were endless. I thought, if I were a bachelor, not an Englishman, and had no love for old friends and fields, and no decided religious opinions, I could live very well, for the rest of my life, in a lodging above one of the bookseller's shops on the Quai de Voltaire, where I should look over the water to the Tuileries, and have the Elysian fields in my eye for my evening walk.

I liked much what little I saw of the French people. They are accused of vanity; and doubtless they have it, and after a more obvious fashion than other nations; but their vanity, at least, includes the wish to please; other people are necessary to them; they are not wrapped up in themselves; not sulky; not too vain even to tolerate vanity. Their vanity is too much confounded with self-satisfaction. There is a good deal of touchiness, I suspect, among them—a good deal of ready-made heat, prepared to fire up in case the little commerce of flattery and sweetness is not properly carried on. But this is better than ill-temper, or than such egotism as is not to be appeased by anything short of subjection. On the other hand, there is more melancholy than one could expect, especially in old faces. Consciences in the south are frightened in their old age, perhaps for nothing. In the north, I suspect, they are frightened earlier, perhaps from equal want of knowledge. The worst in France is (at least, from all that I saw), that *fine* old faces are rare. There are multitudes of pretty girls; but the faces of both sexes fall off deplorably as they advance in life; which is not a good symptom. Nor do the pretty faces, while they last, appear to contain much depth, or sentiment, or firmness of purpose. They seem made like their toys, not to last, but to break up.

Fine faces in Italy are as abundant as cypresses. However, in both countries, the inhabitants appeared to us amiable, as well as intelligent; and without disparagement to the angel faces which you meet with in England, and some of which are perhaps finer than any you see anywhere else, I could not help thinking,



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that, as a race of females, the countenances both of the French and Italian women announced more pleasantness and reasonableness of intercourse, than those of my fair and serious countrywomen. The Frenchwoman looked as if she wished to please you at any rate, and to be pleased herself. She is too conscious ; and her coquetry is said, and I believe with truth, to promise more than an Englishman would easily find her to perform ; but at any rate she thinks of you somehow, and is smiling and good humoured. An Italian woman appears to think of nothing, not even of herself. Existence seems enough for her. But she also is easy of intercourse, smiling when you speak to her, and very unaffected. Now, in simplicity of character the Italian appears to me to have the advantage of the English women, and in pleasantness of intercourse both Italian and French. When I came to England, after a residence of four years abroad, I was grieved at the succession of fair sulky faces which I met in the streets of London. They all appeared to come out of unhappy homes. In truth, our virtues, or our climate, or whatever it is, sit so uneasily upon us, that it is surely worth while for our philosophy to inquire whether, in some points of moral and political economy, we are not a little mistaken. Gipsies will hardly allow us to lay it to the climate.

It was a blessed moment, nevertheless, when we found ourselves among those dear sulky faces, the countrywomen of dearer ones, not sulky. We set out from Calais in the steamboat, which carried us to London, energetically trembling all the way under us, as if its burning body partook of the fervour of our desire ; [arriving on the 14th of October.] Here (thought we), in the neighbourhood of London, we are ; and may we never be without our old fields again in this world, or the old "familiar faces" in this world or in the next.

# AT HOME IN ENGLAND

## CHAPTER XXIII

### AT HOME IN ENGLAND

[OCTOBER 1825-1832]

ON returning to England, we lived a while at Highgate, where I took possession of my old English scenery and my favourite haunts, with a delight proportionate to the difference of their beauty from that of beautiful Italy. For a true lover of nature does not require the contrast of good and bad in order to be delighted ; he is better pleased with harmonious variety. He is content to wander from beauty to beauty, not losing his love for the one because he loves the other. A variation on a fine theme of music is better still than a good song after a bad one. It retains none of the bitterness of fault-finding.

I used to think in Italy that I was tired of vines and olives, and the sharp outlines of things against indigo skies ; and so I was ; but it was from old love, and not from new hatred. I humoured my dislike because I knew it was ill-founded. I always loved the scenery at heart, as the cousin-german of all other lovely scenery, especially of that which delighted me in books.

But in England I was at home ; and in English scenery I found my old friend "pastoral" still more pastoral. It was like a breakfast of milk and cream after yesterday's wine. The word itself was more verified : for pastoral comes from pasture ; it implies cattle feeding, rather than vines growing, or even goats browsing on their tops ; and here they were in plenty, very different from the stall-fed and rarely seen cattle of Tuscany. The country around was almost all pasture ; and beloved Hampstead was near, with home in its churchyard as well as in its meadows. Again I wandered with transport through

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“Each alley green,  
And every bosky bourn from side to side,—  
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood.”

Only for “bosky bourn” you must read the ponds in which Shelley used to sail his boats, and very little brooks unknown to all but the eyes of their lovers. The walk across the fields from Highgate to Hampstead, with ponds on one side, and Caen Wood on the other, used to be (and I hope is still, for I have not seen it for some years) one of the prettiest of England. *Poets’* (vulgarly called Millfield) *Lane* crossed it on the side next Highgate, at the foot of a beautiful slope, which in June was covered with daisies and buttercups: and at the other end it descended charmingly into the Vale of Health, out of which rose the highest ground in Hampstead. It was in this spot, and in relation to it and about this time (if I may quote my own verses in illustration of what I felt), that I wrote some lines to “Gipsy June,” apostrophizing that brown and happy month on the delights which I found again in my native country, and on the wrongs done him by the pretension of the month of May.

\* \* \* \* \*

“May, the jade, with her fresh cheek,  
And the love the bards bespeak,—  
May, by coming first in sight,  
Half defrauds thee of thy right,  
For her best is shared by thee  
With a wealthier potency;  
So that thou dost bring us in  
A sort of May-time masculine,  
Fit for action or for rest,  
As the luxury seems the best,—  
Bearding now the morning breeze,  
Or in love with paths of trees,  
Or disposed full length to lie,  
With a hand-enshaded eye,  
On th’ warm and golden slopes,  
Basker in the buttercups;  
List’ning with nice distant ears  
To thy shepherd’s clapping shears,  
Or the next field’s laughing play  
In the happy wars of hay,  
While its perfume breathes all over,  
Or the bean comes fine, or clover.

## AT HOME IN ENGLAND

'Oh! could I walk round the earth  
With a heart to share my mirth,  
With a look to love me ever,  
Thoughtful much, but sullen never,  
I could be content to see  
June and no variety,  
Loitering here, and living there,  
With a book and frugal fare,  
With a finer gipsy time,  
And a cuckoo in the clime,  
Work at morn and mirth at noon,  
And sleep beneath the sacred moon."<sup>1</sup>

No offence, nevertheless, as John Bunce<sup>2</sup> would have said, to the "stationary domesticities." For fancy takes old habits along with it in new shapes; domesticity itself can travel; and I never desired any better heaven, in this world or the next, than the old earth of my acquaintance put in its finest condition, my own nature being improved, of course, along with it. I have often envied the household waggon that one meets with in sequestered lanes—a cottage on wheels—moving whithersoever it pleases, and halting for as long a time as may suit it. So, at least, one fancies; ignoring all about parish objections, inconvenient neighbourhoods, and want of harmony in the vehicle itself. The pleasantest idea which I can conceive of this world, as far as oneself and one's enjoyments are concerned, is to possess some favourite home in one's native country, and then travel over all the rest of the globe with those whom we love; always being able to return, if we please; and ever meeting with new objects, as long as we choose to stay away. And I suppose this is what the inhabitants of the world will come to, when they have arrived at years of discretion, and railroads will have hastened the maturity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From a poem by Leigh Hunt entitled "To June."

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Amory (? 1691–1788) was the author of that extraordinary book *John Bunce*, 1756–1766, a favourite not only of Hunt's but of Lamb's and Hazlitt's.]

<sup>3</sup> "There is a flock of pigeons at Maiano, which, as they go careering in and out among the olive-trees, look like the gentle spirits of the Decameron again assembled in another shape. Alas! admire all this as I may, and thankful as I am, I would quit it all for a walk over the fields from Hampstead, to one or two houses I



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I seemed more at home in England, even with Arcadian idealisms, than I had been in the land nearer their birth-place; for it was in England I first found them in books, and with England even my Italian books were more associated than with Italy itself. When in prison, I had bought the collection of poetry called the *Parnaso Italiano*, a work in fifty-six duodecimo volumes, adorned with vignettes. The bookseller, by the way, charged me thirty pounds for it; though I could have got it, had I been wise, for a third part of the sum, albeit it was neatly bound. But I thought it cheap; and joyfully got rid of my thirty pounds for such a southern treasure; which, I must own, has repaid me a million times over, in the pleasure I have received from it. In prison it was truly a lump of sunshine on my shelves; and I have never since been without it. I even took it with me to its native land.<sup>1</sup>

This book aided Spenser himself in filling my English walks with visions of gods and nymphs—of enchantresses and magicians; for the reader might be surprised to know to what a literal extent such was the case. I suspect I had far more sights of “Proteus coming from the sea,” than Mr. Wordsworth himself; for he desired them only in despair of getting anything better out of the matter-of-fact state of the world about him; whereas, the world had never been able to deprive me, either of the best hopes for itself, or of any kind of vision, sacred or profane, which I thought suitable to heaven or earth. I saw fairies in every wood, as I did the advent of a nobler Christianity in the churches; and by the help of the beautiful universality which books had taught me, I

could mention. My imagination can travel a good way; but, like the Tartar, it must carry its tents along with it. New pleasures must have old warrants. I can gain much, but I can afford to lose nothing.”—Notes to *Bacchus in Tuscany*, p. 174.

[<sup>1</sup> In one of Thornton Hunt’s notes to his father’s correspondence, he refers to the year 1832 as the period in which Leigh Hunt experienced the greatest pressure of pecuniary difficulties. Some letters of this year clearly testify to his acute distress, and one in particular contains a pathetic appeal to a friend for his aid in selling his beloved copy of the *Parnaso Italiano* for £15.]

## AT HOME IN ENGLAND

found those two classes of things not less compatible than Chaucer and Boccaccio did, when they talked of "Holy Ovid," and invoked the saints and the gods in the same exordium. I found even a respectful corner in my imagination for those poetical grown children in Italy, who (literally) played at "Arcadians" in gardens made for the purpose, and assumed names from imaginary farms in old Greece. The "bays" upon poets' heads in old books had prepared me, when a boy, to like that image of literary success. I had myself played at it in dedications and household pastimes; and the names of Filicaia, Menzini, Guidi, and other grave and classical Italian poets, who had joined the masquerade in good faith, completed my willingness not to disesteem it.

The meaning of all this is, that at the time of my life in question, I know not in which I took more delight—the actual fields and woods of my native country, the talk of such things in books, or the belief which I entertained that I should one day be joined in remembrance with those who had talked it. I used to stroll about the meadows half the day, with a book under my arm, generally a "Parnaso" or a Spenser, and wonder that I met nobody who seemed to like the fields as I did. The jests about Londoners and Cockneys did not affect me in the least, as far as my faith was concerned. They might as well have said that Hampstead was not beautiful, or Richmond lovely; or that Chaucer and Milton were Cockneys when they went out of London to lie on the grass and look at the daisies. The Cockney school of poetry is the most illustrious in England; for, to say nothing of Pope and Gray, who were both veritable Cockneys, "born within the sound of Bow Bell," Milton was so too; and Chaucer and Spenser were both natives of the city. Of the four greatest English poets, Shakespeare only was not a Londoner.

But the charge of Cockneyism frightened the book-sellers. I could never understand till this moment, what it was, for instance, that made the editor of a magazine reject an article which I wrote, with the

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✓ mock-heroical title of *The Graces and Anxieties of Pig Driving*. I used to think he found something vulgar in the title. He declared that it was not he who rejected it, but the proprietor of the magazine. The proprietor, on the other hand, declared that it was not he who rejected it, but the editor. I published it in a magazine of my own, the *Companion*,<sup>1</sup> and found it hailed as one of my best pieces of writing. But the subject was a man inducting a pig into Smithfield through the intricacies of Cockney lanes and alleys; and the names of Smithfield, and Barbican, and Bell-alley, and Ducking Pond-row, were not to be ventured in the teeth of my friends the Tories under the signature of the quondam editor of the *Examiner*. I subsequently wrote a fictitious autobiography, of which I shall speak presently, under the title of *Sir Ralph Esher*.<sup>2</sup> It was republished the other day with my name to it for the first time. The publisher in those days of Toryism and Tory jesting would not venture to print it. I was at length irritated by misrepresentations on the subject of Lord Byron to publish some autobiographical accounts of myself, and a refutation of matters relating to his lordship;<sup>3</sup> and to this book, for obvious reasons, my name was suffered to be attached; but this only made matters worse; and it is inconceivable to what extent I suffered, in mind, body, and estate, because the tide of affairs was against me, and because the public (which is not the best trait in their character) are inclined to believe whatever is said of a man by the prosperous. I have since been lauded to the skies, on no other account, for productions which at that period fell dead from the press. People have thought I wrote them yesterday; and I have sometimes been at once mystified and relieved, to observe who the persons were that have so praised them, and what they had omitted

[<sup>1</sup> Published weekly from January 9 to July 28, 1828.]

[<sup>2</sup> *Sir Ralph Esher; or Memoirs of a Gentleman of the Court of Charles the Second, including those of his friend Sir Philip Herne*. London, 1832, 3 vols. Republished in one volume with the author's name and a preface in 1850.]

[<sup>3</sup> See notes on pp. 91 and 166, Vol. II.]

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to notice for no better reason. It is said, and I believe truly, that no man in the long run can be written down, or up, except by himself; but it is painful to think how much can be done to both purposes in the meantime, and for those who deserve neither the one nor the other. A secret history of criticism, for some twenty years at a time, with its favouritisms, its animosities, and its hesitations, would make a very curious book; but the subject would be so disagreeable, that it would require almost as disagreeable a person to write it.

But adieu to records of this kind for ever. It is not possible for many persons to have had greater friends than I have. I am not aware that I have now a single enemy; and I accept the fortunes which have occurred to me, bad and good, with the same disposition to believe them the best that could have happened, whether for the correction of what was wrong in me, or the improvement of what was right.

I struggled successfully with this state of things, as long as their causes lasted. It was not till Toryism began its declension with the rise of Louis Philippe, and the small stock of readers who never left me was increasing, that the consequences of what I had battled with, forced me almost to drop the pen for some years. I had never lost cheerfulness of tone, for I had never ceased to be cheerful in my opinions. I had now reason to be more hopeful than ever; but the wounds resulting from a long conflict, my old ignorance of business, and that very tendency to reap pleasure from every object in creation, which at once reconciled me to loss, retained me my few readers, and hindered me from competing with the more prudential lessons of writers who addressed the then state of society, and conspired to set me at the mercy of wants and creditors. The ailment from which I suffered in Italy returned with double force; and I know not what would have happened to me for some time, short of what temperance and my opinions rendered impossible, if friends, with a delicacy as well as generosity, which I have never been able to thank sufficiently to this day (for



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the names of some with whom I was not conversant eluded my gratitude) had not supplied the defects of fortune. Ought I to blush for stating my obligations thus publicly? I do, if it be held fit that I should; for I am loath not to do what is expected of me, even by a respectable prejudice, when it is on the side of delicacy and self-respect. But far more, I conceive, should I have reason to blush, and upon those very accounts, first, if I could not dare to distinguish between an ordinary and an exceptional case; and secondly, and most of all, if I could not subordinate a prejudice, however respectable, to the first principles of social esteem, and justify by my gratitude the sympathies which my writings had excited.

The little periodical work to which I have alluded—the *Companion*—consisted partly of criticisms on theatres, authors, and public events, and partly of a series of essays in the manner of the *Indicator*. Some of the essays have since accompanied the republications of that older work. They contained some of what afterwards turned out to be my most popular writing. But I had no money to advertise the publication; it did not address itself to any existing influence; and in little more than half a year I was forced to bring it to a conclusion.

The *Companion* was written at Highgate; but the opening of the court scenes in *Sir Ralph Esher* was suggested by the locality of Epsom, to which place we had removed,<sup>1</sup> and which saw the termination of what it had commenced.

Those who are not acquainted with the work, may be told that it is the fictitious autobiography of a gentleman of the court of Charles the Second, including the adventures of another, and notices of Cromwell, the Puritans, and the Catholics. It was given to the world anonymously, and, notwithstanding my wishes to the contrary, as a novel; but the publisher<sup>2</sup> pleaded

[<sup>1</sup> In 1828.]

[<sup>2</sup> Henry Colburn (d. 1855). "A pushing advertising publisher, alleged to have royal blood in his veins."—Life of Hazlitt, by Mr. Augustine Birrell. 1902.]

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hard for the desirableness of so doing ; and as he was a good-natured man, and had liberally enabled me to come from Italy, I could not say Nay. It is not destitute of adventure ; and I took a world of pains to make it true to the times which it pictured ; but whatever interest it may possess is so entirely owing, I conceive, to a certain reflecting exhibition of character, and to fac-simile imitations of the courts of Charles and Cromwell, that I can never present it to my mind in any other light than that of a veritable set of memoirs.

The reader may judge of the circumstances under which authors sometimes write, when I tell him that the publisher had entered into no regular agreement respecting this work ; that he could decline receiving any more of it whenever it might please him to do so ; that I had nothing else at the time to depend on for my family ; that I was in very bad health, never writing a page that did not put my nerves into a state of excessive sensibility, starting at every sound ; and that whenever I sent the copy up to London for payment, which I did every Saturday, I always expected, till I got a good way into the work, that he would send me word he had had enough. I waxed and waned in spirits accordingly, as the weeks opened and terminated ; now being as full of them as my hero Sir Ralph, and now as much otherwise as his friend Sir Philip Herne ; and these two extremes of mirth and melancholy, and the analogous thoughts which they fed, made a strange kind of harmony with the characters themselves ; which characters, by the way, were wholly fictitious, and probably suggested by the circumstance. Merry or melancholy, my nerves equally suffered by the tensivity occasioned them in composition. I could never (and I seldom ever could, or can) write a few hundred words without a certain degree of emotion, which in a little while suspends the breath, then produces a flushing in the face, and, if persevered in, makes me wake up, when I have finished, in a sort of surprise at the objects around me, and a necessity of composing myself by patience

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and exercise. When the health is at its worst, a dread is thus apt to be produced at the idea of recommencing; and work is delayed, only to aggravate the result. I have often tried, and sometimes been forced to write only a very little while at a time, and so escape the accumulation of excitement; but it is very difficult to do this; for you forget the intention in the excitement itself; and when you call it to mind, you continue writing, in the hope of concluding the task for the day. A few months ago, when I had occasion to look at *Sir Ralph Esher* again, after some lapse of time, I was not a little pleased to find how glibly and at their ease the words appeared to run on, as though I had suffered no more in writing it than Sir Ralph himself. But thus it is with authors who are in earnest. The propriety of what they are saying becomes a matter of as much nervous interest to them, as any other exciting cause; and I believe, that if a writer of this kind were summoned away from his work to be taken to the scaffold, he would not willingly leave his last sentence in erroneous condition.

The reader may be surprised to hear, after these remarks, that what I write with the greatest composure is verses. He may smile, and say that he does not wonder, since the more art the less nature, or the more artificiality the less earnestness. But it is not that; it is that I write verses only when I most like to write; that I write them slowly, with loving recurrence, and that the musical form is a perpetual solace and refreshment. The earnestness is not the less. In one respect it is greater, for it is more concentrated. It is forced, by a sweet necessity, to say more things in less compass. But then the necessity is sweet. The mode, and the sense of being able to meet its requirements, in however comparative a degree, are more than a sustainment: they are a charm. This is the reason why poetry, not of the highest order, is sometimes found so acceptable. The author feels so much happiness in his task, that he cannot but convey happiness to his reader.

# LITERARY PROJECTS

## CHAPTER XXIV

### LITERARY PROJECTS

[1830-1838]

WE left Epsom to return to the neighbourhood of London, which was ever the natural abiding-place of men of letters, till railroads enlarged their bounds. We found a house in a sequestered corner of Old Brompton,<sup>1</sup> and a landlord in the person of my friend Charles Knight,<sup>2</sup> with whom an intercourse commenced, which I believe has been a pleasure on both sides. I am sure it has been a good to myself. If I had not a reverence of a peculiar sort for the inevitable past, I could wish that I had begun writing for Mr. Knight immediately, instead of attempting to set up another periodical work of my own, without either means to promulgate it, or health to render the failure of little consequence. I speak of a literary and theatrical paper called the *Tatler*,<sup>3</sup> set up in 1830. It was a very little work, consisting but of four folio pages; but it was a daily publication: I did it all myself, except when too ill; and illness seldom hindered me either from supplying the review of a book, going every night to the play, or writing the notice of the play the same night at the printing-office. The consequence was, that the work, slight as it looked, nearly killed me; for it never prospered

[<sup>1</sup> There is a letter in the National Portrait Gallery of Hunt's dated 1830, from Cromwell Lane, Old Brompton. This was a part of the street now called Harrington Road, which runs between Queen's Gate and Old Brompton Road.]

[<sup>2</sup> Charles Knight (1791-1873), author and publisher, a pioneer of cheap literature. He published Hunt's *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*,<sup>3</sup> 1835, also *The London Journal* (1834-5).]

[<sup>3</sup> *The Tatler*, a daily journal of Literature and the Stage. London, 1830-32, folio, 4 vols., Sept. 4, 1830, to Mar. 31, 1832. Leigh Hunt's connexion with the paper ceased with the issue for Feb. 13, 1832. The periodical was afterwards continued in a 4to form, of which 59 numbers were issued.]



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beyond the coterie of play-going readers, to whom it was almost exclusively known; and I was sensible of becoming weaker and poorer every day. When I came home at night, often at morning, I used to feel as if I could hardly speak; and for a year and a half afterwards, a certain grain of fatigue seemed to pervade my limbs, which I thought would never go off. Such, nevertheless, is a habit of the mind, if it but be cultivated, that my spirits never seemed better, nor did I ever write theatricals so well, as in the pages of this most unremunerating speculation.

I had attempted, just before, to set up a little work called *Chat of the Week*;<sup>1</sup> which was to talk, without scandal, of anything worth public notice. The Government put a stop to this speculation by insisting that it should have a stamp; which I could not afford. I was very angry, and tilted against governments, and aristocracies, and kings and princes in general; always excepting King William, for whom I had regard as a reformer, and Louis Philippe, whom I fancied to be a philosopher. I also got out of patience with my old antagonists the Tories, to whom I resolved to give as good as they brought; and I did so, and stopped every new assailant. A daily paper, however small, is a weapon that gives an immense advantage; you can make your attacks in it so often. However, I always ceased as soon as my antagonists did.

In a year or two after the cessation of the *Tatler* [*i.e.* in 1833], my collected verses were published<sup>2</sup> by subscription; and as a reaction by this time had taken place in favour of political and other progress, and the honest portion of its opponents had not been unwilling to discover the honesty of those with whom they differed, a very handsome list of subscribers appeared

<sup>1</sup> The *Chat of the Week*, or *Compendium of all Topics of Public Interest*, original and select. Thirteen numbers were issued, the last of which was dated August 28, 1830. It was succeeded by the *Tatler*.]

<sup>2</sup> The *Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, London, Moxon. 1832. The date above is incorrect. Among the subscribers to this volume were Wordsworth and Macaulay; also Thomas Moore, who had said some withering things about Hunt in his *Life of Byron*.

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in the *Times* newspaper, comprising names of all shades of opinion, some of my sharpest personal antagonists not excepted.

In this edition of my *Poetical Works* is to be found the only printed copy of a poem, the title of which (*The Gentle Armour*) has been a puzzle for guessers. It originated in curious notions of delicacy. The poem is founded on one of the French *fabliaux*, *Les Trois Chevaliers et la Chemise*. It is the story of a knight, who, to free himself from the imputation of cowardice, fights against three other knights in no stouter armour than a lady's garment thus indicated. The late Mr. Way, who first introduced the story to the British public, and who was as respectable and conventional a gentleman, I believe, in every point of view, as could be desired, had no hesitation some years ago, in rendering the French title of the poem by its (then) corresponding English words, *The Three Knights and the Smock*; but so rapid are the changes that take place in people's notions of what is decorous, that not only has the word "smock" (of which it was impossible to see the indelicacy, till people were determined to find it) been displaced since that time by the word "shift"; but even that harmless expression for the act of changing one garment for another, has been set aside in favour of the French word "chemise"; and at length not even this word, it seems, is to be mentioned, nor the garment itself alluded to, by any decent writer! Such, at least, appears to have been the dictum of some customer, or customers, of the bookseller who published the poem. The title was altered to please these gentlemen; and in a subsequent edition of the Works, the poem itself was withdrawn from their virgin eyes.

The terrible original title was the *Battle of the Shift*; and a more truly delicate story, I will venture to affirm, never was written. Charles Lamb thought the new title unworthy of its refinement, "because it seemed ashamed of the right one." He preferred the honest old word. But this was the author of *Rosamund Gray*.

We had found that the clay soil of St. John's Wood

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did not agree with us.<sup>1</sup> Or, perhaps, it was only the melancholy state of our fortune: for the New Road, to which we again returned, agreed with us as little. It was there that I thought I should have died, in consequence of the long fatigue which succeeded the working of the *Tatler*.

While in this quarter I received an invitation to write in the new evening paper called the *True Sun*. I did so; but nothing of what I wrote has survived, I believe; nor can I meet with the paper anywhere, to ascertain. Perhaps an essay or two originated in its pages, to which I cannot trace it. I was obliged for some time to be carried every morning to the *True Sun* office in a hackney-coach. I there became intimate with Laman Blanchard,<sup>2</sup> whose death<sup>3</sup> was such a grief and astonishment to his friends. They had associated anything but such an end with his witty, joyous, loving, and beloved nature. But the watch was overwound, and it ran suddenly down. What bright eyes he had! and what a kindly smile! How happy he looked when he thought you were happy; or when he was admiring somebody; or relating some happy story! If suicide, bad as it often is, and full of recklessness and resentment, had not been rescued from indiscriminate opprobrium, Laman Blanchard alone should have rescued it. I never think of him without feeling additional scorn for the hell of the scorner Dante, who has put all suicides into his truly infernal regions, both those who were unjust to others, and those who were unjust only to themselves.<sup>4</sup>

From the noise and dust of the New Road, my family removed to a corner in Chelsea,<sup>5</sup> where the air of the neighbouring river was so refreshing, and the quiet of

[<sup>1</sup> On June 20th, 1831, Hunt dates a letter from Elm Tree Road, St. John's Wood.]

[<sup>2</sup> Sidney Laman Blanchard (1803-1845) was the editor of the *True Sun*. Later he became associated with the *Examiner*. He met his death by his own hand under distressing circumstances.]

[<sup>3</sup> About ten years back.—T.H.]

[<sup>4</sup> See the speech of the good Piero delle Vigne, who was driven to kill himself by the envy of those that hated him for fidelity to his master.—*Inferno*, canto xiii.]

[<sup>5</sup> Hunt writes from 5, York Buildings, New Road, on January

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the "no-thoroughfare" so full of repose, that although our fortunes were at their worst, and my health almost at a piece with them, I felt for some weeks as if I could sit still for ever, embalmed in the silence. I got to like the very cries in the street, for making me the more aware of it by the contrast. I fancied they were unlike the cries in other quarters of the suburbs, and that they retained something of the old quaintness and melodiousness which procured them the reputation of having been composed by Purcell and others. Nor is this unlikely, when it is considered how fond those masters were of sporting with their art, and setting the most trivial words to music in their glees and catches. The primitive cries of cowslips, primroses, and hot cross-buns seemed never to have quitted this sequestered region. They were like daisies in a bit of surviving field. There was an old seller of fish, in particular, whose cry of "shrimps as large as prawns," was such a regular, long-drawn, and truly pleasing melody, that in spite of his hoarse and, I am afraid, drunken voice, I used to wish for it of an evening, and hail it when it came. It lasted for some years; then faded and went out; I suppose, with the poor old weather-beaten fellow's existence.

This sense of quiet and repose may have been increased by an early association of Chelsea with something out of the pale; nay, remote. It may seem strange to hear a man who has crossed the Alps talk of one suburb as being remote from another. But the sense of distance is not in space only; it is in difference and discontinuance. A little back-room in a street in London is farther removed from the noise, than a front room in a country town. In childhood the farthest local point which I reached anywhere, provided it was quiet, always seemed to me a sort of the end of the world; and I remembered particularly feeling this, the only time when I had previously visited Chelsea, which was at that period of life. So the green rails of the gardens in Paddington seemed as remote as if they

22nd, 1833, adding: "Mr. Moxon's address is safer as I hope to move speedily." He found a house at 4, Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea.]



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were a thousand miles off. They represented all green rails and all gardens, at whatever distance. I have a lively recollection, when a little boy, of having been with my mother one day walking out by Mile End, where there was a mound covering the remains of people who died in the Plague. The weather had been rainy; and there was a heavy mud in the road, rich with the colour of brown (I suppose Mr. West had put his thought in my head of finding colour in mud. Whoever it was, he did me a great deal of good). I remember to the present day looking at this rich mud colour and admiring it, and seeing the great broad wheels of some wagons go through it, and thinking awfully of the mound, and the plague, and the dead people; always feeling at the same time the delight of being abroad with my mother, with whom I could have walked through any peril, to say nothing of so many strange satisfactions. Now, this region also looked the remotest in the world. Even the name of "Mile End" had to do with the impression; for it seemed to be, not the end of one mile, but of many; the end of miles in general; of *all* miles. Measurement itself terminated at that spot. What there was beyond it I did not conjecture.

I know not whether the corner I speak of remains as quiet as it was. I am afraid not; for steamboats have carried vicissitude into Chelsea, and Belgravia threatens it with her mighty advent. But to complete my sense of repose and distance, the house was of that old-fashioned sort which I have always loved best, familiar to the eyes of my parents, and associated with childhood. It had seats in the windows, a small third room on the first floor, of which I made a *sanctum*, into which no perturbation was to enter, except to calm itself with religious and cheerful thoughts (a room thus appropriated in a house appears to me an excellent thing); and there were a few lime-trees in front, which, in their due season, diffused a fragrance.

In this house we remained seven years; in the course of which, besides contributing some articles to the *Edinburgh* and *Westminster Reviews*, and producing a

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good deal of the book since called *The Town*, I set up [in 1834] the *London Journal*, endeavoured to continue the *Monthly Repository*, and wrote the poem entitled *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*, the *Legend of Florence*, and three other plays which are yet unpublished. Here, also, I became acquainted with Thomas Carlyle,<sup>1</sup> one of the kindest and best, ■■ well as most

[<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt actually met Carlyle in February, 1832, before the former came to Chelsea, having previously sent Carlyle ■ copy of his *Christianism*. In May, 1834, Carlyle is seeking for a house; he calls on Hunt, and makes the following characteristic entry in his journal: "Hunt's household in Cheyne Row, Chelsea. Nondescript! unutterable! Mrs. Hunt asleep on cushions; four or five beautiful strange gipsy-looking children running about in undress, whom the lady ordered to get us tea. The eldest boy,\* Percy, a sallow black-haired youth of sixteen, with a kind of dark cotton night-gown on, went whirling about like a familiar, providing everything; an indescribable dream-like household. Am to go again tomorrow to see if there be any houses, and what they are. Bedtime now, and so good-night, ye loved ones. My heart's blessing be with all."—J. A. Froude's *Thomas Carlyle, First Forty Years of his Life* new edition, vol. ii. p. 44.

The Carlyles moved into their Chelsea home on June 10th, 1834, and during the "three or four days of *quasi* camp life" while they were getting their things into order, "Leigh Hunt was continually sending us notes; most probably he would in person step across before bedtime, and give us an hour of the prettiest melodious discourse."—*Ib.*, vol. ii. p. 451.

There are two other pleasant glimpses of Hunt and his delightful conversational gifts, which belong to this period, sketched by Carlyle's inimitable pen: the first in a letter given by Froude in his *Carlyle* describing a visit to Hunt's house—where "the noble Hunt receives you in the spirit of a king, apologizes for nothing, places you in the best seat, takes a window-sill himself if there is no other, and then folding closer his loose-flowing 'muslin cloud' of a printed night-gown in which he always writes, commences the liveliest dialogue on philosophy and the prospects of man (who is to be beyond measure 'happy' yet); which again he will courteously terminate the moment you are bound to go." The other passage is in the *Reminiscences*—"Our commonest evening sitter, for a while, was Leigh Hunt, who lived close by, and delighted to sit talking with us (free, cheery, idly melodious ■■ bird on bough), or listening, with real feeling, to her [Mrs. Carlyle's] old Scotch tunes on the piano, and winding up with ■ frugal morsel of Scotch porridge (endlessly admirable to Hunt). . . . Hunt was always accurately dressed these evenings, and had a fine chivalrous gentlemanly carriage, polite, affectionate, respectful (especially to her), and yet so free and natural. . . . Dark complexion . . . copious clean strong black hair, beautifully shaped head, fine beaming serious hazel eyes; seriousness and intellect the main expression of the face (to our surprise at first); he

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\* Carlyle probably meant the "eldest boy" in the house at that time; Thornton of course was the eldest son.

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eloquent of men ; though in his zeal for what is best he sometimes thinks it incumbent on him to take not the kindest tone, and in his eloquent demands of some hearty uncompromising creed on our parts, he does not quite set the example of telling us the amount of his own. Mr. Carlyle sees that there is a good deal of rough work in the operations of nature : he seems to think himself bound to consider a good deal of it devilish, after the old Covenanter fashion, in order that he may find something angelical in giving it the proper quantity of vituperation and blows ; and he calls upon us to prove our energies and our benevolence by acting the part of the wind rather than the sun, of warring rather than peace-making, of frightening and forcing rather than conciliating and persuading. Others regard this view of the one thing needful, however strikingly set forth, as an old and obsolete story, fit only to be finally done with, and not worth the repetition of the old series of reactions, even for the sake of those analogies with the physical economy of the world, which, in the impulse which nature herself gives us towards progression, we are not bound to suppose everlastingly applicable to its moral and spiritual development. If mankind are destined never to arrive at years of discretion, the admonition is equally well-founded and unnecessary ; for the old strifes will be continued at all events, the admonition (at best) being a part of them. And even then, I should say that the world is still a fine, rich, strenuous, beautiful, and desirable thing, always excepting the poverty that starves, and one or two other evils which on no account must we consent to suppose irremediable. But if the case be otherwise, if the hopes which nature herself has put into our hearts be something better than

would lean on his elbow against the mantelpiece (fine clean elastic figure, too—he had five feet ten or more) and look round him nearly in silence, before taking leave for the night, ‘as if I were ■ Lar,’ said he once, ‘or permanent household god here’ (such his polite ariel-like way). Another time, arising from this Lar attitude, he repeated (voice very fine), as if in sport of parody, yet of something very sad perceptible, ‘While I to sulphurous and penal fire’ . . . as the last thing before vanishing.”]

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incitements to hopeless action, merely for the action's sake, and this beautiful planet be destined to work itself into such a condition as we feel to be the only fit condition for that beauty, then, I say, with every possible respect for my admirable friend, who can never speak but he is worth hearing, that the tale which he condescends to tell is no better than our old nursery figment of the *Black Man and the Coal-hole*, and that the growing desire of mankind for the cessation of bitterness, and for the prevalence of the sweets of gentleness and persuasion, is an evidence that the time has arrived for dropping the thorns and husks of the old sourness and austerity, and showing ourselves worthy of "the goods the gods provide us."

Mr. Carlyle's antipathy to "shams" is highly estimable and salutary. I wish Heaven may prosper his denouncements of them, wherever they exist. (But the danger of the habit of denouncing—of looking at things from the antipathetic instead of the sympathetic side—is, that a man gets such a love for the pleasure and exaltation of fault-finding, as tempts him, in spite of himself, to make what he finds; till at length he is himself charged with being a "sham"; that is to say, a pretender to perceptions and virtues which he does not prove, or at best a willing confounder of what differs from modes and appearances of his own, with violations of intrinsical wisdom and goodness. Upon this principle of judgment, nature herself and the universe might be found fault with; and the sun and the stars denounced for appearing no bigger than they do, or for not confining the measure of their operation to that of the taper we read by.) Mr. Carlyle adopted a peculiar semi-German style, from the desire of putting thoughts on his paper instead of words, and perhaps of saving himself some trouble in the process. I feel certain that he does it from no other motive; and I am sure he has a right to help himself to every diminution of trouble, seeing how many thoughts and feelings he undergoes. He also strikes an additional blow with the peculiarity, rouses men's attention by it,



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and helps his rare and powerful understanding to produce double its effect. It would be hard not to dispense with a few verbs and nominative cases, in consideration of so great a result. Yet, if we were to judge him by one of his own summary processes, and deny him the benefit of his notions of what is expedient and advisable, how could he exculpate this style, in which he denounces so many "shams," of being itself a sham? of being affected, unnecessary, and ostentatious? a jargon got up to confound pretension with performance, and reproduce endless German talk under the guise of novelty?

Thus much in behalf of us dulcet signors of philanthropy, and conceders of good intention, whom Mr. Carlyle is always girding at, and who beg leave to say that they have not confined their lives to words, any more than the utterers of words more potential, but have had their "actions" too, and their sufferings, and even their thoughts, and have seen the faces of the gods of wonder and melancholy; albeit they end with believing them to be phantoms (however useful) of bad health, and think nothing finally potential but gentleness and persuasion.

It has been well said, that love money as people may, there is generally something which they love better; some whim, or hobby-horse; some enjoyment or recreation; some personal, or political, or poetical predilection; some good opinion of this or that class of men; some club of one's fellows, or dictum of one's own;—with a thousand other *somes* and probabilities. I believe that what Mr. Carlyle loves better than his fault-finding, with all its eloquence, is the face of any human creature that looks suffering, and loving, and sincere; and I believe further, that if the fellow-creature were suffering only, and neither loving nor sincere, but had come to a pass of agony in this life, which put him at the mercies of some good man for some last help and consolation towards his grave, even at the risk of loss to repute, and a sure amount of pain and vexation, that man, if the groan reached him in its forlornness, would be Thomas Carlyle.

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The *London Journal*<sup>1</sup> was a miscellany of essay criticism, and passages from books. Towards the close, it was joined by the *Printing Machine*, but the note which it had struck was of too æsthetical a nature for cheap readers in those days; and [in 1835], after attaining the size of a goodly folio double volume, it terminated. I have since had the pleasure of seeing the major part of the essays renew their life, and become accepted by the public, in a companion volume to the *Indicator*, entitled the *Seer*.<sup>2</sup> But the reputation, as usual, was too late for the profit. Neither the *Seer* nor the *Indicator* are mine. The *Seer* does not mean a prophet, or one gifted with second sight, but an observer of ordinary things about him, gifted by his admiration of nature with the power of discerning what everybody else may discern by a cultivation of the like secret of satisfaction. I have been also pleased to see that the *London Journal* maintains a good, steady price with my old friends, the bookstalls. It is in request, I understand, as a book for sea-voyages; and assuredly its large, triple-columned, eight hundred pages, full of cheerful ethics, of reviews, anecdotes, legends, table-talk, and romances of real life, make a reasonable sort of library for a voyage, and must look pleasant enough, lying among the bulky things upon deck. The *Romances of Real Life*<sup>3</sup> were, themselves, collected into a separate volume. They contain the best things out of the *Lounger's Common-Place Book*, and other curious publications, with the addition of comments by the editor. These romances are as little

[<sup>1</sup> "*Leigh Hunt's London Journal*. To assist the Inquiring, Animate the Struggling, and Sympathize with all. London: Charles Knight, Ludgate Street, and Henry Hooper, Pall Mall East, 1834-1835." 2 vols. folio. Issued weekly from April 2, 1834, to Dec. 31, 1835. Incorporated with the *Printing Machine*, on reaching No. 62. "Launcelot Cross" (Mr. Frank Carr), has devoted a little book to this publication; "Characteristics of Leigh Hunt" exhibited in that typical periodical, *Leigh Hunt's London Journal* (1834-35), with illustrative notes." London, 1878.]

[<sup>2</sup> *The Seer; or, Common-Places Refreshed*. 2 parts. London, 1840-41.]

[<sup>3</sup> *One Hundred Romances of Real Life; selected and annotated*. Comprising remarkable historical and domestic facts, illustrative of human nature. 8vo. London, 1843.]

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my property as the book of essays just mentioned : but I venture to think that they are worth recommending for their own sakes, and that the comments contain some of my best reflections.

Alas ! whither am I going, thus talking about myself ? But I must finish what I have got so far with.

Among the contributors to the *London Journal* was a young friend, who, had he lived, would have been a very distinguished man. I allude to Egerton Webbe,<sup>1</sup> a name well known in private circles of wit and scholarship. He was a wit of the first water, a scholar writing elegant Latin verse, a writer of the best English style, having philological reason for every word he uttered—a reasoner, a humorist, a politician, a cosmopolite, a good friend, brother, and son ; and to add a new variety to all this, he inherited from his grandfather, the celebrated glee composer, a genius for musical composition, which in his person took a higher and wider range, being equally adapted for pathos and comedy. He wrote a most humorous farce, both words and music ; and he was the author of a strain of instrumental music in the funeral scene of the *Legend of Florence*, which was taken by accomplished ears for a dirge of some Italian master.

Unfortunately, like Beethoven, he was deaf ; but so delightful was his conversation, that I was glad to strain my voice for it the whole evening to such an extent, that, on his departure, my head would run round with dizziness, and I could not go to sleep.

Had he lived, he would have enriched a family too good and trusting for the ordinary course of the world. He died ; and their hopes and their elder lives went

[<sup>1</sup> Egerton Webbe (? 1810–1840), on whose death Leigh Hunt contributed an obituary notice in the form of a letter (dated Aug. 6, 1840), addressed to the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, in which he suggests that the booksellers and Webbe's friends should unite in making a selection of his writings. The letter was afterwards printed, at Croydon, in the form of an 8 pp. pamphlet. Besides noticing his friend Egerton Webbe, Hunt drew attention to Benjamin Disraeli's "Revolutionary Epic" in the pages of the *London Journal*.]

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with him, till they all meet somewhere again. Dear Egerton Webbe! How astonished was Edward Holmes, the best musical critic which this nation has produced, to see him come into his house with his young and blooming face, after reading essays and metaphysics, which he took for those of some accomplished old gentleman!

I would not do my friend's memory such disservice as to give the following *jeux d'esprit* by way of specimens of his *powers*. They are samples only of his pastime and trifling. But I fear that such entertainment as my book may contain has been growing less and less; and I put them in, that he may still do for me what he has done before—give my jaded spirits a lift.

Scholarly readers know Martial well enough; and therefore they know, that in pouring forth everything which came into his head, bad and good, he is sometimes bad indeed. He realizes his own jest about the would-be sly fellow, who, in order not to be thought poor, pretended a voluntary appearance of poverty. Martial, on these occasions, utters his nothings with an air as if they were something on that very account; as if they possessed a merit which stood in no need of display. Such are the "epigrams" which my friend bantered in the *London Journal* with the following exquisite imitations. He has not even forgotten (as the *Journal* observed) the solemn turn of the heads of the epigrams, "Concerning Flavius"—"On the same"—"To Antonius concerning Lepidus," &c., "nor the ingenious art with which Martial contrives to have a reason asked him, for what he is bent on explaining." The banters, it is true, "have this drawback; that being good jokes upon bad ones, they cannot possibly convey the same impression;" but the reader is willing to guess it through the wit.

### "CONCERNING JONES.

Jones eats his lettuces undress'd!  
D' you ask the reason? 'Tis confess'd,—  
That is the way Jones likes them best."



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"TO SMITH CONCERNING THOMSON.

Smith, Thomson puts no claret on his board;  
D' you ask the reason?—Thomson can't afford."

"TO GIBBS, CONCERNING HIS POEMS.

You ask me if I think your poems good;  
If I could praise your poems, Gibbs,—I would."

"CONCERNING THE SAME.

Gibbs says, his poems ■ sensation make;—  
But Gibbs, perhaps, is under a mistake."

"TO THOMSON, CONCERNING DIXON AND JACKSON.

How Dixon can with Jackson bear,  
You ask me, Thomson, to declare;—  
Thomson, Dixon's Jackson's heir."

Were ever three patronymics jumbled so together!  
or with such a delightful importance? It is like the  
jingling of the money in Jackson's pocket.

How strange to sit laughing at my fireside over  
these epigrams, while he that wrote them, instead of  
coming to drink tea with me, is . . .

But we are all bound somewhere together, as the  
sun and the planets are bound in one direction towards  
another part of the heavens; and the intervals between  
the departures of the dead and the living are very  
small.

The *London Journal* was followed by the production  
of *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*; <sup>1</sup>—a poem which,  
poem though it was, and one which gave me a sense of  
my advance in imaginative culture, and consequent  
power of expression, nothing but a sense of duty could  
have enabled me to persist in writing. I have implied  
this before; but I will now state, for reasons which  
may be of service, that I was several times forced to  
quit my task by accesses of wonder and horror so over-  
whelming, as to make me burst out in perspirations (a  
thing very difficult in me to produce), and that nothing

[<sup>1</sup> *Captain Sword and Captain Pen*. A Poem. By Leigh Hunt.  
With some remarks on War and Military Statesmen. London,  
Charles Knight, Ludgate Street, 1835.]

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but the physical relief thus afforded me, the early mother-taught lesson of subjecting the one to the many, and perhaps the habit of thinking the best in worst, and believing that everything would, somehow or other, come right at last, could have given me courage enough to face the subject again.

I remember three passages in particular, which tried me to a degree almost unbearable. One was that in which the shriek of the horse is noticed; another, the description of the bridegroom lying by the ditch, sabred, and calling for water; and the third, the close of the fourth canto, where the horriblest thing occurs, that maddens a taken city. Men of action are too apt to think that an author, and especially a poet, dares and undergoes nothing as he peacefully sits by his fireside "indulging his muse." But the muse is sometimes an awful divinity. With truest devotion, and with dreadful necessity for patience, followed by what it prayed for, were the last three lines of that canto written:<sup>1</sup> Not that the trusting belief, for which I owe an unceasing debt of gratitude to my parents, failed me then or ever; but all the horror of wonder (and in such visitations wonder is a very horrible thing) passed over me with its black burthen; and I looked back on it, as one might look upon the passage of some tremendous spirit, whose beneficence, though you still believed in it, had taken that astounding shape. Firmly do I believe, that all such sufferings,—and far worse, those under the very imagination of which they suffer,—are for the very best and happiest ends, whatever may be the darkness which they cast on one as they go.

It was in that persuasion, as well as from need of relief, and for the due variation of my theme, that I intermingled these frightful scenes with passages of military gaiety, of festive enjoyment, and even of pleasantry; such as the description of the soldier's

■ "O God! let me breathe, and look up at thy sky,  
Good is as hundreds, evil ■ one:  
Round about goeth the golden sun."

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march, of the entertainments given to Captain Sword, and of the various dances in the ball-room:—

“The country-dance, small of taste;  
And the waltz, that loveth the lady’s waist!  
And the gallopade, strange agreeable tramp;  
Made of a scrape, a hobble, and stamp,” &c.

Gibbon said, that his having been a captain of militia was of use to him in writing his great work. With due feelings of subordination to the captain, I can say, that my having been a private in a regiment of volunteers was of use to me in performing this painful duty.

“Steady! steady!—the masses of men  
Wheel, and fall in, and wheel again,  
Softly as circles drawn with pen.”

I had been a part of the movement, and felt how soft and orderly it was.

“Now for the flint, and the cartridge bite;  
Darkly gathers the breath of the fight,  
Salt to the palate, and stinging to sight.”

Many a cartridge had I bitten, and thus learned the salt to that dreadful dinner.

It was about this time that I projected a poem of a very different sort, which was to be called *A Day with the Reader*.

I proposed to invite the reader to breakfast, dine, and sup with me, partly at home, and partly at a country inn, in order to vary the circumstances. It was to be written both gravely and gaily, in an exalted or in a lowly strain, according to the topics of which it treated. The fragment on Paganini was a part of the exordium:

“So play’d of late to every passing thought  
With finest change (might I but half as well  
So write!) the pale magician of the bow,” &c.

I wished to write in the same manner, because Paganini, with his violin, could move both the tears and the laughter of his audience, and (as I have described him doing in the verses) would now give you the notes of birds in trees, and even hens feeding in a farm-yard (which was a corner into which I meant to take my

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companion), and now melt you into grief and pity, or mystify you with witchcraft, or put you into a state of lofty triumph like a conqueror. The phrase of "smiting" the chords,—

"He smote;—and clinging to the serious chords  
With godlike ravishment," &c.

was no classical commonplace; nor, in respect to impression on the mind, was it exaggeration to say, that from a single chord he would fetch out

"The voice of quires, and weight  
Of the built organ."

Paganini, the first time I saw and heard him, and the first moment he struck a note, seemed literally to strike it; to give it a blow. The house was so crammed, that, being among the squeezers in "standing room" at the side of the pit, I happened to catch the first sight of his face through the arm akimbo of a man who was perched up before me, which made a kind of frame for it; and there, on the stage, in that frame, as through a perspective glass, were the face, bust, and raised hand, of the wonderful musician, with his instrument at his chin, just going to commence, and looking exactly as I have described him.

"His hand,  
Loading the air with dumb expectancy,  
Suspended, ere it fell, a nation's breath.

"He *smote*;—and clinging to the serious chords  
With godlike ravishment, drew forth a breath,—  
So deep, so strong, so fervid thick with love,—  
Blissful, yet laden as with twenty prayers,  
That Juno yearned with no diviner soul  
To the first burthen of the lips of Jove.

"The exceeding mystery of the loveliness  
Sadden'd delight; and with his mournful look,  
Dreary and gaunt, hanging his pallid face  
Twixt his dark flowing locks, he almost seem'd,  
To feeble or to melancholy eyes,  
One that had parted with his soul for pride,  
And in the sable secret liv'd forlorn."

To show the depth and identicalness of the impression which he made on everybody, foreign or native, an Italian who stood near me, said to himself, after a sigh,



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"O Dio!" and this had not been said long, when another person in the same manner uttered the words, "O Christ!" Musicians pressed forward from behind the scenes, to get as close to him as possible; and they could not sleep at night for thinking of him.

I have mentioned the *Monthly Repository*. It was originally a magazine in the Unitarian interest, and contained admirable papers by Mr. William Johnson Fox,<sup>1</sup> the present member for Oldham, Mr. John Mill,<sup>2</sup> and others; but it appeared, so to speak, in one of the least though most respectable corners of influence, and never obtained the repute it deserved. Nor, if such writers as these failed to counteract the drawback, could it be expected that others would help it better. The author of *Orion*<sup>3</sup> made the attempt in vain; and so did the last of its editors, the present writer, though Landor<sup>4</sup> assisted him. [The transfer of editorship took place in 1837.]<sup>5</sup> In this publication, like better things before it, was sunk *Blue-Stocking Revels*, or the *Feast of the Violets*<sup>6</sup>—a kind of female *Feast of the Poets*, which nobody took any notice of; though I had the pleasure of hearing that Mr. Rogers said it would have been sufficient "to set up half a dozen young men about town in a reputation for wit and fancy."

As Apollo in the *Feast of the Poets* gave a dinner to those gentlemen, in *Blue-Stocking Revels* he gives a ball and supper to literary ladies. The guests were so numerous as to call forth a pleasant remark from Lord

[<sup>1</sup> W. J. Fox (1786-1864.) Like Leigh Hunt, De Quincey, and Peacock, he won prizes offered by the *Monthly Preceptor*. He was for some time the editor and proprietor of the *Monthly Repository*, and was one of the first to recognize the merit of Robert Browning's poetry.]

[<sup>2</sup> John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) the philosopher.]

[<sup>3</sup> R. H. Horne was another editor of the *Monthly Repository*. He published *Orion*, an epic poem, in 1843, at the price of one farthing.]

[<sup>4</sup> Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864) showed much friendliness to Leigh Hunt. He addressed some verses to him "On an omission in his *Feast of the Poets*;" and besides writing for the *Monthly Repository*, he was a contributor to *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*.]

[<sup>5</sup> Hunt conducted the *Monthly Repository* from July, 1837, to March, 1838.]

[<sup>6</sup> This poem was reprinted in *Hunt's Poetical Works*, 1844.]



Kensington - July 9<sup>th</sup>

My dear Walter Savage Landor -  
immortal names -

Conceive, when I write those words,  
how I felt in reading your own. I am  
your truly honored, obliged, & affectionate  
friend, Leigh Hunt.

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Holland, who, in a letter in which he acknowledged the receipt of the poem, said, that "the inspector of blue ankles under Phœbus" had, he perceived, "no sinecure." I believe the fair guests were not dissatisfied with their entertainment. It was thought by somebody, that objection was intended to Mrs. Somerville, because it was said of her, that

"Instead of the little Loves, laughing at colleges,  
Round her, in doctors' caps, flew little Knowledges."

But I did not mean to imply, either that the lady's knowledge was little, or that she was not a very amiable person. It was only a commonplace jest in a new shape. Perhaps it ought to have been followed by a recommendation to look into the faces of the "little Knowledges"; who are apt to have more love in them, than people suspect.

A bookseller objected to publishing this poem on a very different account. He thought that Lady Blessington would take offence at the mention of her "shoulders," and at being called a "Venus grown fat."

"'Lady Blessington!' cried the glad usher aloud,  
As she swam through the doorway, like moon from a cloud.  
I know not which most her face beam'd with,—fine creature!  
Enjoyment, or judgment, or wit, or good-nature.  
Perhaps you have known what it is to feel longings  
To pat buxom shoulders at routs and such throngings;—  
Well,—think what it was, at a vision like that!  
A grace after dinner!—a Venus grown fat!"

It would be strange if any lady, grown stout, would object to being thought a Venus notwithstanding: and it would be still stranger, if, after having her face lauded for so many fine qualities, she should object to having her shoulders admired. Lady Blessington, at all events, had too much understanding to make such a mistake; and, though I had not the pleasure of her acquaintance, I had good reason to know that she took the passage in anything but an offensive light. Let me take this opportunity of saying that her ladyship's account of Lord Byron is by far the best and most



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sensible I am acquainted with. Her writings, indeed throughout, though not of a nature qualified to endure were remarkable for a judgment as well as benevolence for which many would not give credit to an envied beauty.

# PLAY-WRITING—CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER XXV

### PLAY-WRITING—CONCLUSION

[1840-1850]

**P**OEMS of the kind just mentioned were great solaces to care; but the care was great notwithstanding, I felt age coming on me, and difficulties not lessened by failing projects: nor was I able, had I been never so inclined, to render my faculties profitable "in the market." It is easy to say to a man—Write such and such a thing, and it is sure to sell. Watch the public taste, and act accordingly. Care not for original composition; for inventions or theories of your own; for æsthetics, which the many will be slow to apprehend. Stick to the works of others. Write only in magazines and reviews. Or, if you must write things of your own compile. Tell anecdotes. Reproduce memoirs and topographies. Repeat, in as many words of your own as you can, other men's criticisms. Do anything but write to the few, and you may get rich.

There is a great deal of truth in all this. But a man can only do what he can, or as others will let him. Suppose he has a conscience that will not suffer him to reproduce the works of other people, or even to speak what he thinks commonplace enough to have become common property. Suppose this conscience will not allow him to accommodate himself to the opinion of editors and reviewers. Suppose the editors and reviewers themselves will not encourage him to write on the subjects he understands best, perhaps do not understand the subjects themselves; or suppose, at best, that they play with him, postpone him, and keep him only as a resource when their ordinary circle fails them. Suppose he has had to work his way up through animosities, political and religious, and through such clouds of adversity as, even when they have passed away, leave a chill of misfortune round his reputation, and make "prosperity" slow to encourage him. Suppose,

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in addition to all this, he is in bad health, and of fluctuating, as well as peculiar powers; of a temperament easily solaced in mind, and as easily drowsed in body; quick to enjoy every object in creation, everything in nature and in art, every sight, every sound, every book, picture, and flower, and at the same time really qualified to do nothing, but either to preach the enjoyment of those objects in modes derived from his own particular nature and breeding, or to suffer with mingled cheerfulness and poverty the consequences of advocating some theory on the side of human progress. Great may sometimes be the misery of that man under the necessity of requesting forbearance or undergoing obligation; and terrible will be his doubts, whether some of his friends may not think he had better have had a conscience less nice, or an activity less at the mercy of his *physique*. He will probably find himself carelessly, over-familiarly, or even superciliously treated, pitied, or patronized, by his inferiors; possibly will be counted inferior, even in moral worth, to the grossest and most mercenary men of the world; and he will be forced to seek his consolation in what can be the only final consolation of any one who needs a charitable construction; namely, that he has given, hundreds of times, the construction which he would receive once for all.

I did not understand markets; I could not command editors and reviewers; I therefore obeyed an inclination which had never forsaken me, and wrote a play. The propensity to dramatic writing had been strong in me from boyhood. I began to indulge in it long before my youthful criticisms on the theatre. The pieces which I then wrote have been mentioned in the earlier part of this volume. They were all failures, even in my own opinion; so that there can be little doubt of their having been actually such: but the propensity remained, and the present consequence was the *Legend of Florence*.<sup>1</sup>

I wrote this play in six weeks, in a state of delightful absorption, notwithstanding the nature of the story and

[<sup>1</sup> *A Legend of Florence*, ■ Play in Five Acts, by Leigh Hunt, 1840.]

## PLAY-WRITING—CONCLUSION

of the cares which beset me ; and now, for the first time, I thought I had done something dramatic, which might be put forth to the world without misgiving. It was declined by the principal manager then reigning. I wrote another blank-verse play in five acts, thinking to please better by adapting it to his taste, but I succeeded as little by this innocent artifice ; and thus seemed closed upon me the prospect of any bettering of my fortunes, the most needed.

I have reasons of a very special and justifiable kind for saying thus much, and showing how my labours were lost ; and I subsequently lost more ; but not without an interval of refreshment and hope. How pleasant it was, long afterwards, to find my rejected *Legend* welcomed and successful at another theatre [Covent Garden, on February 7th, 1840].<sup>1</sup> Here I became acquainted, for the first time, with a green-room, and surrounded with a congratulating and cordial press of actors and actresses. But every step which I took into Covent Garden Theatre was pleasant from the first. One of the company, as excellent a woman as she was an actress, the late Mrs. Orger, whom I had the pleasure of knowing, brought me acquainted with the management ; an old and esteemed friend was there to second her, in the person of the late Mr. Henry Robertson, the treasurer, brother, too, of our quondam young society of “ Elders,” and every way harmonious associate of many a musical party afterwards at the Novellos’, and at Hampstead. Mr. Charles Mathews welcomed me with a cordiality like his own : Mr. Planché, the wit and fairy poet of the house, whom envy accused of being jealous of the approach of new dramatists, not only contributed everything in his power to assist in making me feel at home in it, but added the applause of his tears on my first reading of the play. To conclude my triumph in the green-room, when I read the play afterwards to its heroine, Miss Tree (now Mrs. Charles Kean), I had the pleasure of seeing the tears pour down her glowing cheeks, and of being told by her afterwards that she considered her representation of

<sup>1</sup> It was revived in 1852 at Sadler’s Wells.]



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the character her best performance. And finally, to crown all, in every sense of the word, loyal as well as metaphorical, the Queen did the play the honour of coming to see it twice (to my knowledge)—four times, according to that of Madame Vestris, who ought to have known. Futhermore, when her Majesty saw it first, she was gracious and good-natured enough to express her approbation of it to the manager in words which she gave him permission to repeat to me; and futhermost of all, some years afterwards she ordered it to be repeated before her at Windsor Castle, thus giving me a local memory in the place, which Surrey himself might have envied, and which Warton would certainly have hung, as a piece of its tapestry, with a sonnet.

The four other blank-verse plays of which I have spoken, and one or two of which would have also come out at Covent Garden, had the management prospered, were called *The Secret Marriage*,<sup>1</sup> since called *The Prince's Marriage*, which is the play I have mentioned as having endeavoured to propitiate my first manager's good-will. *Lovers' Amazements*, in three acts; *The Double*, the piece of mixed prose and verse in two; and *Look to your Morals*, the prose afterpiece, or petty comedy. *Lovers' Amazements* has since made its appearance, as late as the year 1858,<sup>2</sup> with a success equal to that of the *Legend*. I shall have occasion to speak of it once again, before I conclude.

The *Secret Marriage* is the story of a prince of Navarre, whose marriage with a lady not of blood royal is resented by an envious nobility. It is founded on the celebrated history of Ines de Castro, of which, indeed, I first intended it to consist; but in these effeminate days of the drama, I found that its tragical termination would not be endured. At least the actors

[<sup>1</sup> From a letter to Mr. Robert Bell, dated November 2nd, 1848, it appears that Hunt at the time of writing was at work on this play which was accepted by Benjamin Webster, in 1850, but was never produced.]

[<sup>2</sup> Hunt's play, *Lovers' Amazements*, appeared in the new series of the *London Journal*, 1850, and was reprinted in the *Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, now first collected, which appeared in America in 1857. The Play was produced at the Lyceum on January 20th, 1858.]

## PLAY-WRITING—CONCLUSION

told me so. I said that I had not intended to crown her dead body (which was what her husband actually did, forcing the nobles who assassinated her to attend the ceremony); my design was to crown her coffin; which is done in the *Secret Marriage*; though matters in that play, in deference to modern requirement, are still brought happily about. I confess that, both as a critic and an Englishman, I am ashamed of this alleged weakness on the part of the British public; this charge of not being able to endure a strong sensation, however salutary. Nor do I believe it. The strong Saxon people, who have carried the world before them, are not the audiences to quail before a tragedy. The only point is how to set it truly and nobly before them; and not in that gratuitous and vulgar style of horror, which it becomes manhood to repudiate. How is it that they endure *Othello* and *Lear*? "Oh! but," say the actors, "that is Shakespeare's writing." Yes; and thus, like the cunning priests of a faith which they dishonour, they make a bugbear as well as a business of their idol; as if all worship of the true and beautiful were to fail in its effects with others, because they are without it themselves. I have heard actors themselves say, notwithstanding this esoterical religion of theirs, that Shakespeare himself would be damned to-morrow if he were to write now. The *Secret Marriage* was rejected by the same manager that rejected the *Legend of Florence*; which is perhaps a good omen, if I could get it performed. But then it "costs money," pathetically say the caterers for the public amusement.

*Lovers' Amazements* is an imbroglio of two ladies and two gentlemen, who are constantly undergoing surprises which make them doubt the fidelity or the regard of one another. But then, in this beautiful modern state of the British theatres, I was asked, with the like pathos, where were two gentleman actors and two lady actresses to be found, who could, or, if they could, would perform a play in which they are all four put on a level perhaps in point of intellectual pretension. Nevertheless, after a lapse of many years, the piece, as I have just stated, has been brought out with success. Some other parti-

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culars respecting it will be given in order of time. In vain I answered that one charming actress took singular pains to get it performed, and that another would have had it performed, but for the closing of her theatre. I was defied to get four gentlefolks of the stage together, or any four together, competent to perform the parts. How different from what I had seen in former days !

The *Double* is founded on a story, from the Italian novelists, of a clever fisherman, who bears so strong a resemblance to a gentleman who is drowned, while bathing in his company, that he is tempted to personate the deceased, and to take possession of his house. To render the personation more probable, I turned the fisherman into an actor. But this piece also was objected to on the score of its not being thoroughly "pleasant." That, according to the actors, is the great requisite now with the robust British public. You must make everything "pleasant" to them ;—give them nothing but sops and honey. At least, in polite theatres. You may frighten the people in the Borough ; but you must not think of startling the nerves at the West End.

The two principal characters in *Look to your Morals*, are an English valet and a French damsel whom he has married. He is very jealous ; and in order to keep down the attractiveness of her animal spirits, he has told her that there is nothing but the most rigid propriety in England, both in morals and demeanour, and that she is to regulate her behaviour accordingly. The girl, who is a very innocent girl, believes him ; and the consequence is, that she has to undergo a series of attentions, which very much open her French eyes. I know not how far the impression of this is to rank with the "*unpleasant*" things that are not to be risked with the British public. The stage, to be sure, is so much in the habit of pampering the national self-love, especially on the side of its virtues and respectability, and this, too, at the expense of our lively neighbours, that I can suppose it possible for a theatre to see some danger in it. At all events, the manager in whose hands it has been put, kept it by him as safe as gunpowder—so safe

## PLAY-WRITING—CONCLUSION

indeed, Hibernically speaking, that on a late inquiry for it it appeared to be lost ; and I have no complete copy. He is old and ailing, however ; and I shall not turn gunpowder myself, and blow him up. [It was found after the author's death, and returned to the family.]

About a dozen years ago, in consequence of disappointments of this kind, and of those before mentioned, some friends renewed an application to Lord Melbourne, which they had made in the reign previous. It was thought that my sufferings in the cause of reform, and my career as a man of letters, rendered me not undeserving a pension. His lordship received both the applications with courtesy ; which he does not appear to have shown in quarters where the interest might have been thought greater ; but the pension was not granted. Perhaps the courtesy was on that account. Perhaps he gave my friends these and other evidences of his good-will towards me, knowing that he should advise nothing further ; for I had twice during his administration received grants from the Royal Bounty Fund, of two hundred pounds each ; once during the reign of King William, and the second after the accession of her Majesty. It subsequently turned out, that Lord Melbourne considered it proper for no man to have a pension given him by one sovereign, who had been condemned in a court of law for opposing another.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneous with the latest movement about the pension, was one on the part of my admirable friend, Dickens, and other distinguished men,—Forsters and Jerrolds,—who, combining kindly purpose with an amateur inclination for the stage, had condescended to show to the public what excellent actors they could have been, had they so pleased—what excellent actors, indeed, some of them were. They were of opinion that a benefit for myself at one of the metropolitan theatres would be a dishonour on neither side. A testimonial of a different sort, which had been proposed by some other friends, was superseded by this form of

[<sup>1</sup> In 1847, Leigh Hunt received a letter from the then Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, informing him that a Civil List pension of £200 had been conferred upon him. See Appendix.]



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one; and preparations were being accordingly made, when the grant of the pension seemed to render it advisable that the locality of the benefit should be transferred from London to a provincial stage, in acknowledgment to the superior boon, and for the avoidance of all appearance of competing with it. The result was still of great use to me, and my name was honoured in a manner I shall never forget by an address from the pens of Mr. Serjeant (late Justice) Talfourd and Sir Edward Bulwer, and the plaudits of Birmingham and Liverpool. Talfourd had always been one of my best and dearest friends; and Sir Edward, with whom I became acquainted much later, had, before I knew him, and when it was a bold thing to praise me in the circles, done me, nevertheless, that handsome and valuable service. The pieces performed on this occasion were Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*,<sup>1</sup> and the farce of—I forget what, in the country, for I was not there; but the play had been repeated before in town, as it was afterwards, and several farces came after it.

If anything had been needed to show how men of letters include actors, on the common principle of the greater including the less, these gentlemen would have furnished it. Mr. Dickens' "Bobadil" had a spirit in it of intellectual apprehension beyond anything the existing stage has shown; his farce throughout was always admirable—quite rich and filled up; so were the tragical parts in which he subsequently appeared; and Mr. Forster delivered the verses of Ben Jonson and Fletcher with a musical flow and a sense of their grace and beauty unknown, I believe, to the recitation of actors at present. At least I have never heard anything like it since Edmund Kean's. The lines came out of his lips as if he loved them. I allude particularly, in this instance, to his performance of the "Younger Brother." But he did it always, when sweet verse required it.

[<sup>1</sup> In July, 1847, two performances were given of Jonson's play in Manchester and Liverpool, for the benefit of Leigh Hunt, from which he received a sum of 400 guineas.]

## PLAY-WRITING—CONCLUSION

Meantime, I had removed with my family from Chelsea to Kensington;<sup>1</sup> and although my health was not bettered, as I hoped it would have been by the change, but, on the contrary, was made worse in respect to body, than I ever experienced, and showed me the formidable line that is drawn between being elderly and being old (for we unfortunately got into a part which had been denounced in the books of the Sanitary Commissioners); yet I loved Kensington for many reasons, and do still, even for one more of a melancholy description, hereafter to be noticed, nay, love it the more on that account, though I can never pass the spot without a pang.

Here, sometimes in the Gardens, sometimes in the quondam Nightingale-lane of Holland House (now partially diverted), I had the pleasure of composing the *Palfrey*,<sup>2</sup> the scenes of which are partly laid in the place. Here (with the exception of a short interval at Wimbledon) I wrote, besides reviews and shorter articles, one of the dramatic pieces above mentioned, the criticism in *Imagination and Fancy*<sup>3</sup> and *Wit and Humour*;<sup>4</sup> the *Stories from the Italian Poets*;<sup>5</sup> the *Jar of Honey*;<sup>6</sup> the criticism in the *Book for a Corner*;<sup>7</sup> a portion of the *Town*<sup>8</sup> (most of which had been produced

[<sup>1</sup> Early in 1840 to 32, Edwardes Square.]

[<sup>2</sup> *The Palfrey*; a Love Story of Old Times. By Leigh Hunt (with illustrations), 1842.]

[<sup>3</sup> *Imagination and Fancy*; or selections from the English Poets illustrative of these first requisites of their art; with markings of the best passages, critical notices of the writers, and an Essay in answer to the question, "What is Poetry?" By Leigh Hunt: London, 1844.]

[<sup>4</sup> *Wit and Humour*, selected from the English Poets, with an illustrative Essay and critical comments. By Leigh Hunt. London, 1846.]

[<sup>5</sup> *Stories from the Italian Poets*; with lives of the writers. By Leigh Hunt. 2 vols. London, 1846.]

[<sup>6</sup> *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla*. By Leigh Hunt. Illustrated by Richard Doyle. London, 1848. Originally appeared in *Ainsworth's Magazine* in 1844.]

[<sup>7</sup> *A Book for a Corner*; or selections in prose and verse from authors the best suited to that mode of enjoyment; with comments on each, and with a general introduction. By Leigh Hunt. Illustrated. 2 vols. London, 1849.]

[<sup>8</sup> *The Town*; its memorable characters and events. By Leigh Hunt. 2 vols. Illustrated. London, 1848. Much of this book had

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long before); and lastly, the greater part of the work which the reader is now perusing. At the close of the second volume of the *Italian Stories* I had a severe illness. I had opposed a lethargic tendency to which I am subject, the consequence of hepatitis, with too free a use of coffee, which ended in a dangerous attack of the loins, the effects of which appeared for a good while to be irrecoverable; but they were not. A friend, the late estimable Mr. Stritch, who had often looked in upon me, and found me sitting with cold feet and with a bust, as it were, on fire, repeatedly warned me of what would happen; but I was sanguine, was foolish, and down I went. I used to envy my friend for his being able to walk leisurely in and out, and thought how sure he was of living beyond me. And now he is gone. Too many of such surprises have I had; but there is always good of some kind in evil. My friend's last moments were as brief as they were unlooked for. I had also another consolation during my illness. It has so happened that several of my illnesses have taken place after I had been writing on matters connected with religion, and in those cases I have always had the comfort of knowing that I had been doing my best to diminish superstition. In the present instance, I had been attacking the infernal opinions of Dante—a task which no respect for his genius, or false considerations for the times in which he lived (for others who lived in them were above them), can ever make me regard but as a duty and a glory; for though I acknowledge the true part of might to be right, yet might of any sort never so much astonished me as that I could not discern in it what was not might; and Dante's venturing on his ghastly visions did not blind me to that false support and intoxicating spirit of vindictiveness, which enabled him to do it. Dante (alas! that such a conjunction should be possible) was one of the greatest poets and most childishly mistaken men that ever existed; and if it requires an audacity like his own to say it—here it is.

appeared in the supplement of the *London Journal*, under the title of "The Streets of London."]

## PLAY-WRITING—CONCLUSION

One more book I wrote partly at Kensington, which I can take no pride in,—which I desire to take no pride in,—and yet which I hold dearer than all the rest. I have mentioned a book called *Christianism, or Belief and Unbelief Reconciled*, which I wrote in Italy. The contents of that book, modified, were added to the one I speak of; and the latter (of which more, when I speak of its completion) had the same object as the former, with better provision for practical result; that is to say, it proposed to supply, not thoughts and aspirations only, but a definite faith, and a daily set of duties, to such humble, yet un-abject, and truly religious souls, as cannot accept unintelligible and unworthy ties of conscience, and yet feel both their weakness and their earnestness with sufficient self-knowledge to desire ties of conscience, both as bonds and encouragements. My family, some other friends, and myself, were in accord upon the principles of the book; it did us good for a sufficient length of time to make us think it would do good to others; and its publication, which has since taken place, was contemplated accordingly.

With the occasional growth of this book, with the production of others from necessity, with the solace of verse, and with my usual experience of sorrows and enjoyments, of sanguine hopes and bitter disappointments, of bad health and almost unconquerable spirits (for though my old hypochondria never returned, I sometimes underwent pangs of unspeakable will and longing, on matters which eluded my grasp), I passed in this and another spot of the same suburb by no means the worst part of these my latter days, till one terrible loss befell me. The same unvaried day saw me reading or writing, ailing, jesting, reflecting, rarely stirring from home but to walk, interested in public events, in the progress of society, in the “New Reformation” (most deeply), in things great and small, in a print, in a plaster-cast, in a hand-organ, in the stars, in the sun to which the sun was hastening, in the flower on my table, in the fly on my paper while I wrote. (He crossed words of which he knew nothing; and perhaps we all do as much every moment, over things of divinest



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meaning.) I read everything that was readable, old and new, particularly fiction, and philosophy, and natural history; was always returning to something Italian, or in Spenser, or in the themes of the East; lost no particle of Dickens, of Thackeray, of Mrs Gaskell (whose *Mary Barton*<sup>1</sup> gave me emotions that required, more and more, the consideration of the good which it must do); called out every week for my *Family Herald*, a little penny publication, at that time qualified to inform the best of its contemporaries; rejoiced in republications of wise and witty Mrs. Gore,<sup>2</sup> especially seeing that she only made us wait for something newer; delighted in the inexhaustible wit of Douglas Jerrold, Thackeray, and his coadjutors, Tom Taylor, Percival Leigh, and others, in *Punch*, the best-humoured and best-hearted satirical publication that ever existed; wondered when Bulwer Lytton would give us more of his potent romances and prospective philosophies; and hailed every fresh publication of James, though I knew half what he was going to do with his lady, and his gentleman, and his landscape, and his mystery, and his orthodoxy, and his criminal trial. But I was charmed with the new amusement which he brought out of old materials. I looked on him as I should look upon a musician, famous for "variations." I was grateful for his vein of cheerfulness, for his singularly varied and vivid landscapes, for his power of painting women at once lady-like and loving (a rare talent), for his making lovers to match, at once beautiful and well-bred, and for the solace which all this has afforded me, sometimes over and over again, in illness and in convalescence, when I required interest without violence, and entertainment at once animated and mild.

Yet I could at any time quit these writers, or any other, for men, who, in their own persons, and in a spirit at once the boldest and most loving, dared to face the most trying and awful questions of the time,—the Lamennais and Robert Owens, the Parkers, the Fox-

[<sup>1</sup> Published in 1848.]

[<sup>2</sup> Catherine Grace Frances Moody, Mrs. Gore, 1799-1861, a novelist, and the author of nearly seventy works.]

## PLAY-WRITING—CONCLUSION

tons, and the Newmans—noble souls, who, in these times, when Christianity is coming into flower, are what the first Christians were when it was only in the root,—brave and good hearts, and self-sacrificing consciences, prepared to carry it as high as it can go, and thinking no earthly consideration paramount to the attainment of its heavenly ends. I may differ with one of them in this or that respect; I may differ with a second in another; but difference with such men, provided we differ in their own spirit, is more harmonious than accord with others; nay, would form a part of the highest music of our sphere, being founded on the very principle of the beautiful, which combines diversity with sameness, and whose “service is perfect freedom.” Nobody desires an insipid, languid, and monotonous world, but a world of animated moral beauty equal to its physical beauty, and a universal church, embracing many folds.

I admire and love all hearty, and earnest, and sympathizing men, whatever may be their creed—the admirable Berkeleys and Whichcotes, the Father Matthews and Geddeses, the Mendelssohns, the Lavaters, the Herders, the Williamses and the Priestleys, the Channings, Adam Clarkes, Halls, Carlyles and Emersons, the Hares, Maurices, Kingsleys, Whatelys, Foxes, and Vaughans; but, of course, I must admire most those who have given the greatest proofs of self-sacrifice, equal to them as the others may be, and prepared to do the like if their conclusions demand it.

Alas! how poor it seems, and how painfully against the grain it is, to resume talk about oneself after adverting to people like these. But my book must be finished; and of such talk must autobiographies be made. I assure the reader, that, apart from emotions forced upon me, and unless I am self-deluded indeed, I take no more interest in the subject of my own history, no, nor a twentieth part so much as I do in that of any other autobiography that comes before me. The present work, originated in necessity, was commenced in unwillingness, has taken several years of illness and interruption to write, repeatedly moved me to ask the

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publisher to let me change it for another (which, out of what he was pleased to consider good for everybody, he would not allow), and I now send it a second time, and with additional matter, into the world, under the sure and certain conviction, that every autobiographer must of necessity be better known to his readers than to himself, let him have written as he may, and that that better knowledge is not likely to lead to his advantage. So be it. The best will judge me kindest; and I shall be more than content with their conclusions.

Among the verses with which I solaced myself in the course of these prose writings, were those which from time to time appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*,<sup>1</sup> on occasions connected with the happiness of the Queen, such as the celebration of her Majesty's birthday, the births of the royal children, etc. I have mentioned the train of ideas which circumstances had led me to associate with my thoughts of the Queen.

I consider myself always a royalist of the only right English sort; that is to say, as a republican, with royalty for his safe-guard and ornament. I can conceive no condition of society in which some form of that tranquil, ornamental, and most useful thing called monarchy, will not be the final refuge of political dispute and vicissitude; and this being my opinion, and loving the Queen as I do, I wish with all my heart that her family may govern us in peace and security to the end of time. But though I reverence the past, and can imagine that aristocracies, like all other great facts, may have rendered great and necessary service in its time, and though I would have no change from past to future take place by any but the softest and most respectful degrees, yet, inasmuch as I am for seeing no paupers in the land, I am for seeing no ultra rich. I love individuals among the aristocracy, and bless and reverence the good they do with their riches; but for their own sakes, as well as for that of the poor, I wish

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt contributed the following to the *Morning Chronicle*.—"To the Queen," May, 1840—"To the infant Princess Royal," November 25, 1840—"Three visions on the birth and christening of the Prince of Wales," February 8, 1842.]

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the poor did not give so much trouble to their riches, nor the riches of their less worthy brethren so many miserable thoughts to the poor. I feel just the same with respect to great cotton-spinners, or to any other amassers of treasure, by the side, and by the means, of the half-starved. And I do not hold myself at all answered by any reference to the ordinations of Providence; for Providence, by the like reasoning, ordines dreadful revenges and retributions; and I think that in the instinctive efforts of humanity to advance, and to advance quietly, Providence clearly ordines that we are to dispense with any such references in either direction.

These opinions of mine would have been seen fully expressed in many a previous publication, nor had they been intimated even courtwards for the first time. They were implied in the following passage from the lines on the birthday of the Princess Alice:

“What a world, were human-kind  
All of one instructed mind!  
What a world to rule, to please;—  
To share 'twixt enterprise and ease!  
*Graceful manners flowing round*  
*From the court's enchanted ground;*  
Comfort keeping all secure,—  
*None too rich, and none too poor!”*

I never addressed any congratulation to the Queen without implying something in this spirit; something in behalf of progress and the poor:

“*May she every day*  
*See some new good winning its gentle way*  
*By means of mild and unforbidden men!*  
And when the sword hath bow'd beneath the pen,  
May her own line a patriarch scene unfold,  
As far surpassing what these days behold,  
E'en in the thunderous gods, iron and steam,  
As they the sceptic's doubt, or wild man's dream!”

(The benediction here passes from the political to the religious future.)

“And to this end,—oh! to this Christian end,  
And the sure coming of its next great friend,  
May her own soul, this instant, while I sing,  
Be smiling as beneath some angel's wing,



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O'er the dear life in life—the small, sweet, new,  
Unselfish self,—the filial self of two;  
Bliss of her future eyes, her pillow'd gaze,  
On whom a mother's heart thinks close, and prays.”  
*Lines on Her Majesty's Birthday.*

In this passage I meant to express a hope that the next reigning sovereign would see a great advance in Christianity itself, and be its friend accordingly. But I did not state what I expected that advance to be. I now feel it my duty to be explicit on the subject ; and the reader will see at once how “unorthodox” is my version of Christianity, when I declare that I do not believe one single dogma, which the reason that God has put in our heads, or the heart that He has put in our bosoms, revolts at. For though reason cannot settle many undeniable mysteries that perplex us, and though the heart must acknowledge the existence of others from which it cannot but receive pain, yet that is no reason why mysteries should be palmed upon reason of which it sees no evidences whatever, or why pain should be forced upon the heart, for which it sees grounds as little. On the contrary, the more mysteries there are with which I cannot help being perplexed, the less number of them will I gratuitously admit for the purpose of perplexing my brain further; and the greater the number of the pains that are forced upon my heart, the fewer will I be absurd enough to invite out of the regions of the unprovable, to afflict me in addition. What evils there are, I find, for the most part, relieved with many consolations: some I find to be necessary to the requisite amount of good; and every one of them I find to come to a termination; for the sufferers either are cured and live, or are killed and die; and in the latter case I see no evidence to prove, that a little finger of them aches any more. This palpable revelation, then, of God, which is called the universe, contains no evidence whatsoever of the thing called eternal punishment; and why should I admit any assertion of it that is not at all palpable? If an angel were to tell me to believe in eternal punishment, I would not do it, for it would better become me to believe the angel a delusion than God monstrous; and

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we make Him monstrous when we make Him the author of eternal punishment, though we have not the courage to think so. For God's sake, let us have piety enough to believe Him better. I speak thus boldly, not in order to shock anybody, which it would distress me to think I did, but because opinions so shocking distress myself, and because they ought, I think, to distress everybody else, and so be put an end to. Of any readers whom I may shock, I beg forgiveness. Only I would entreat them to reflect how far that creed can be in the right which renders it shocking in God's children to think the best of their Father.

I respect all churches which are practically good. I respect the Church of England in particular, for its moderate exercise of power, and because I think it has been a blessed medium of transition from superstition to a right faith. Yet, inasmuch as I am of opinion that the "letter killeth and the spirit giveth life," I am looking to see the letter itself killed, and the spirit giving life, for the first time, to a religion which need revolt and shock nobody.

But it becomes me, before I close my book, to make a greater avowal; for I think it may assist, in however small a degree, towards smoothing the advent of a great and inevitable change.

It seems clear to me, from all which is occurring in Europe at this moment, from the signs in the papal church, in our own church, in the universal talk and minds of men, whether for it or against it, that the knell of the letter of Christianity itself has struck, and that it is time for us to inaugurate and enthrone the spirit. I was in hopes, when Pius the Ninth first made his appearance in Europe, that a great as well as good man had arisen, competent to so noble a task. Young Italy, let loose from prison, fell at his feet; and I think, that had he persevered in what made it do so, all Europe would have fallen at his feet, and the papal power have thus profited by its greatest and only remaining chance of retaining the sceptre of the Christian world. But the new Pope was frightened at being thought one of the "New Christians" (as Lamartine called them);

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he hastened to issue a bull declaring the unalterableness of every papal dogma; and the moment he did that, he signed the death-warrant of his church. Dogma, whatever may be the convulsive appearances to the contrary in certain feeble quarters, has ceased to be a vital European principle; and nothing again will ever be universally taken for Christianity, but the religion of Loving Duty to God and Man;—to God, as the Divine Mind which brings good and beauty out of blind-working matter; and to Man, as God's instrument for advancing the world we live in, and as partaker with his fellow-men of suffering, and endeavour, and enjoyment. "Reason," says Milton, "is choice;" and where is to be found a religion better to choose than this? Immortality is a hope for all, which it is not just to make a blessing for any less number, or a misery for a single soul. Faith depends for its credibility on its worthiness; and without "works" is "dead." But charity, by which lovely Greek word is not to be understood any single form of moral grace and kindness, but every possible form of it conducive to love on earth, and its link with heaven, is the only *sine quâ non* of all final opinions of God and man.

"Behold I give unto you a new commandment,—Love one another." "In this ye fulfil the law and the prophets." "By their fruits ye shall know them." "God is Love."

Such, and such only, are the texts upon which sermons will be preached, to the exclusion of whatsoever is infernal and unintelligible. No hell. No unfatherliness. No monstrous exactions of ascent to the incredible. No impious Athanasian Creed. No creed of any kind but such as proves its divineness by the wish of all good hearts to believe it if they might, and by the encouragement that would be given them to believe it, in the acclamations of the earth. The world has outgrown the terrors of its childhood, and no spurious mistake of a saturnine spleen for a masculine necessity will induce a return to them. Mankind have become too intelligent; too brave; too impatient of being cheated, and threatened, and "put off"; too hungry

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and thirsty for a better state of things in the beautiful planet in which they live, and the beauty of which has been an unceasing exhortation and preface to the result. By that divine doctrine will all men gradually come to know in how many quarters the Divine Spirit has appeared among them, and what sufficing lessons for their guidance they have possessed in almost every creed, when the true portions of it shall hail one another from nation to nation, and the mixture of error through which it worked has become unnecessary. For God is not honoured by supposing Him a niggard of His bounty. Jesus Himself was not divine because He was Jesus, but because He had a divine and loving heart; and wherever such greatness has appeared, there has divineness appeared also, as surely as the same sunshine of heaven is on the mountain tops of east and west.

Such are the doctrines, and such only, accompanied by expositions of the beauties and wonders of God's great book of the universe, which will be preached in the temples of the earth, including those of our beloved country, England, its beautiful old ivied turrets and their green neighbourhoods, then, for the first time, thoroughly uncontradicted and heavenly; with not a sound in them more terrible than the stormy yet sweet organ, analogous to the beneficent winds and tempests; and no thought of here or hereafter, that can disturb the quiet aspect of the graves, or the welcome of the new-born darling.

And that such a consummation may come slowly but surely, without intermission in its advance, and with not an injury to a living soul, will be the last prayer, as it must needs be among the latest words, of the author of this book.



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## CHAPTER XXVI

### LIFE DRAWING TOWARDS ITS CLOSE

[1850-1859]

WHEN I closed the preceding chapter, which terminated the first edition of this biography, I did not think it would be followed by one like the present. I fancied I should go on, living as I did before, reading and writing as usual, working placidly rather than otherwise to the last, reckoning confidently on my being survived by every one of my family, old as well as young, and closing my days, if with no great applause from such of my fellow-creatures as had read me or heard of me, yet with no reproach from any of them, and something like regret from all.

This latter portion of my life, trying soever as much of the rest of it had been, has turned out to be the most trying of the whole. It has had at the same time some sweets as well as bitters, and I have never been without the comforts of a hopeful and unembittered religion.

Fortunately, the necessity of squaring the size of the new edition of this biography to that of the series of publications in which it is to appear, has required, that what I have to say, in continuation and completion of it up to the present moment, should be put into as brief a compass as possible; and with the comforts of this inexpressible relief (for I had been given to understand otherwise) I proceed.

The first disquiet I experienced was owing to mistakes respecting the book itself; some of which greatly surprised me. One was, that I had mentioned a friend in a disparaging, nay, in an ironical manner, when I intended him a positive compliment, and one of no little amount. Another, I fear (for I could construe the intimation in no other manner), consisted in supposing that I had undervalued a friend for one of his very accomplishments, when I never dreamt of such a thing,

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nor in fact thought of the accomplishment at all, but a matter in which it pleased his great genius to interest itself. A third mistake, still more extraordinary, gave out that I had not mentioned another friend at all, whom I expressly and honourably recorded. And not to mention mistakes of critics, equally provable by the simple statement of facts (though most of those gentlemen were very kind to the book, and expressed so much personal good-will as to warrant me in thinking my thanks would please them), one of them, who had got into a position of authority which he was not equal to, and whom I had unfortunately met a little while before at a dinner-party, when I had occasion to differ with him in almost all he said, took me to task for having written books at all, and not stuck to a prudent clerkship in the War Office. I thought this at first a singular objection for a Jew (for such, I was told, he was), seeing that I had been a friend of the Jews all my life, and an advocate for their emancipation from all uncivic restrictions. But then, to say nothing of the dinner, I found that he was a converted Jew.

These things disturbed me, and did me disservice; but the mistakes respecting friends were all cleared up, and the most uncomfortable of my feelings had lain in those—so I had nothing remaining at heart to complain of. Among the many pleasant letters, too, which I received about the book from readers, old and new, two in particular would have made me amends for much worse treatment than I received from my bilious quitter of the synagogue; one from a man of lofty genius, whom I hesitate to name, because I have no right, perhaps, to boast of what may have been a mere impulse of his good-nature at the moment, congratulating me on having been victorious in my struggles with the perplexities of good and evil; and another from my dear friend the late Duke of Devonshire, whom I do name because it gives me an opportunity for saying how grateful I am to his memory for acts of kindness never to be forgotten.

Towards the close of the year 1849, a proposition was made to me for the revival, in another form, of the

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*London Journal*,<sup>1</sup> which had been published under my name. It was revived accordingly, and had to boast of contributions from distinguished friends ; but it failed—partly, perhaps, from want of accordance with other pens concerned ; but chiefly from the smallness of the means which the proposers had thought sufficient for its establishment.

I had scarcely become reconciled to this disappointment, when the impending danger was disclosed to me of a domestic calamity of which I had not the least suspicion. It was the consumption of a beloved son, my youngest, the same who has been mentioned as having been born during my sojourn in Italy, and of whom it was added in the first edition, that from that hour to the one in which I was writing he had been a comfort to his parents. Let the reader judge with what feelings I write of him now. He was just reaching his thirtieth year. He had not lived away from home during the whole time, with the exception of some nine or ten months. He was one of the most amiable, interesting, and sympathising of human beings, a musician by nature, modulating sweet voluntaries on the pianoforte—a born poet of the tender domestic sort, though in his modesty he had taken too late to the cultivation of the art, and left little that was finished to show for it ; and he was ever so ready to do good offices for others at his own expense, that I am not sure the first seeds of his distemper were not produced by an act almost identical with that which was the death of my mother, and aggravated by his first undergoing fatigue in assisting the wayfaring and the poor. For nearly two years I saw him fading before my eyes ; and a like time elapsed before he ceased to be the chief occupation of my thoughts. For nine months it was almost a monomania with me ; and I devoutly thanked Heaven for having twice in the course of my life undergone the like haunting of one idea, and so learnt to hope that it

[<sup>1</sup> *Leigh Hunt's Journal* ; a miscellany for the cultivation of the memorable, the progressive and the beautiful (1850-1), of which seventeen numbers appeared. Jointly edited by Leigh Hunt and John Stores Smith, a young Manchester man, the author of a book on Mirabeau and of a volume of Essays entitled "Social Aspects."

## LIFE DRAWING TOWARDS ITS CLOSE

might terminate. I mention this to comfort such persons as have experienced the like suffering. My son's Christian name was Vincent. This is only the second time I have dared to write it. He died at the close of October, in the year 1852, and was buried in beautiful Kensal Green, my own final bed-chamber, I trust, in this world, towards which I often look in my solitary walks, with eyes at once most melancholy, yet consoled.<sup>1</sup>

I add a sonnet of his writing, not because, though very good, it was the best thing he could do, as verses which he left unfinished bear witness; but because it shows the sweetness of his nature. For his whole life was of a piece with it, though it was not called upon to act in that particular manner.

### THE DEFORMED CHILD

An angel, prison'd in an infant frame  
Of mortal sickness and deformity,  
Looks patiently from out that languid eye,  
Matured, and seeming large, with pain. The name  
Of "happy childhood" mocks his movements tame,  
So propp'd with piteous crutch; or forced to lie  
Rather than sit, in its frail chair, and try  
To taste the pleasure of the unshared game.  
He does; and faintly claps his wither'd hands  
To see how brother Willie caught the ball;  
Kind brother Willie, strong, yet gentle all;  
'Twas he that placed him, where his chair now stands,  
In that warm corner 'gainst the sunny wall,—  
God, in that brother, gave him more than lands.

It was a colder break of dawn than usual, but equally beautiful, as if, in both respects it came to take him away, when my son died. His last words were poetry itself. A glass of water had been given him at his request; and only feeling the refreshment of it, he said, "I drink the morning."

And there are those who would persuade us, that this beautiful soul will never be seen by us more! Could space then be filled? so that there should nowhere be any room for the soul? That is impossible.

[<sup>1</sup> See vol. II., p. 144. Hunt was living at 2, Phillimore Terrace, Kensington (where he had moved in 1851) at the time of his son's death. He shortly afterwards moved to 7, Cornwall Road, Hammersmith, where he spent the rest of his days.]



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And must not beauty exist, as long as there are stars, and their orderly movements anywhere? That is certain. Why then should any such portions of beauty perish, when there is no need of their perishing? And why should they not live on, and drink up those tears as they did the morning, since God has so made us long for it, when He need not have done so? As the tendency to sleep is the augury and harbinger of sleep, so desire like this—let us be sure of it—is the augury and harbinger of what it has been made to desire. Do we suppose that God makes manifest halves of anything, without intending the remainders?

I took what refuge I could from this and other afflictions in a task which I had long been anxious to execute, and which, as I was now verging on the time of life usually allotted to human existence, I thought I might not live to perform at all, if I did not hasten it. This was the completion of the work which I have alluded to before under its first title of *Christianism, or Belief and Unbelief Reconciled*, and which I now enlarged and finished, and entitled the *Religion of the Heart*.<sup>1</sup> I knew it could produce me no money; was ashamed indeed of being under the necessity of letting it pay such of its expenses as it could; and to a sense of this waste of precious time (as my friend, the converted Jew, would have called it), I had to add the uneasiness arising from a fear, lest, in spite of all my endeavours to the contrary, and my wish to offend nobody more than I could help, I should displease some of the friends whose attachment and adherence to me under all other trials I most valued. I wish, for many reasons, that I could here say more of the book, than from the limits assigned me I find possible. I had hoped to say much, and to enlarge on that remarkable state of existing religious uneasiness, which I cannot but regard as one of the last phases of transition from inconsistent and embittered modes of faith to one more at peace with

[<sup>1</sup> The *Religion of the Heart: A Manual of Faith and Duty*. London, 1853. There is a copy of this book in the British Museum containing numerous corrections of the author, which he intended for a second edition. It bears the new title, *Cardinomia*.]

## LIFE DRAWING TOWARDS ITS CLOSE

itself, ultimately destined to be wholly so with God, ~~man~~ and futurity. In the first, faintest, and even turbid dawn of the advent of that time, I see the tops of our church steeples, old and new, touched by a light long looked for, long announced, long in spirit against letter prepared for and produced by the divinest hearts that have appeared on earth, very different from polemical prelates or the threatening mistakes of many men; and it was by the sincerity of my belief in the sufficiency of those hearts, and of what they have done for the coming ages (which it was only my humble business to collect and record, as a help towards better services), that I found myself happily relieved from the anxiety alluded to respecting the feelings of friends; not one of whom, from the highest to humblest quarters, gave me the least reason to suppose that I had done anything but even increase their good-will. For which good issue God and their good hearts be thanked. Perhaps it is better, upon the whole, that the book in question, the *Religion of the Heart*, should be left to stand apart for consideration from the present book, and so speak for itself to those who choose to consult it; for my creed, however, as serious upon serious points as eternity itself, being, nevertheless, as cheerful as its freedom from cruel terrors gives it a right to be, I have never yet been able to free myself from the perplexity caused to me as a furtherer of it, between the professional, and as it were exemplary kind of gravity expected of the inculcators of any creed, and the natural spirits, and old cheerful style of intercourse with my readers in ordinary, which the very nature of my religious convictions tends not only to warrant but to increase. Heaven, we may be assured, which has been pleased to gift us with smiles as well as tears, and with hearty laughter itself, does not weigh our levity, no, nor our gravity either, in any such scale of narrowness, as the dulness of dictatorialness of the would-be exclusively pious assume the privilege of determining.

“Alas!

Like smiles and tears upon an infant's face,  
Who wonders at himself, and at such things  
In others' faces, my swift thoughts are mixed.”

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One of the last things that was said to me by my dying son expressed his adhesion to the religion in that book ; and the first adherent which it had, and who was the strongest in expressing to me the comfort which it gave her—I keep putting off the mention of what I must say, but time and necessity press me—was the partner of my life for more than half a century ; for I was married nearly as long ago, and I knew her some years before marriage. She followed her son at the beginning of 1857, and lies near him in the same ground. I dare to say little more. I now seemed—and it has become a consolation to me—to belong as much to the next world as to this, and think I know exactly how I shall feel when I die ; more than half, perhaps, unwilling to go, inasmuch as pangs may attend the process, and life, by its nature, is not made willingly to be parted with ; but as far as affections are concerned, half sorrowing to leave those that still remain to be loved, and half solaced—I think I could even say rejoicing, if it were not for them—in the hope of meeting with those that are gone. My wife was a woman of great generosity, great freedom from every kind of jealousy, great superiority to illusions from the ordinary shows of prosperity. In all the hazards to which I put our little means in the pursuit of what I thought it my duty to do in furtherance of social advancements, and all the injury which really resulted to them, she never uttered a word of objection. She was as uncomplaining during the worst storms of our adversity, as she was during those at sea in our Italian voyage. She had a fine eye for art, as she showed early in life, when wholly untaught, by cutting a little head of Homer in clay, which Mr. West pronounced to be of “extraordinary promise” ; and she subsequently surprised everybody with her facility for cutting profiles of our friends in paper, so true to spirit as well as letter as to make them laugh at the instantaneous recognition of the likeness. Wilkie (afterwards Sir David) was among their admirers, and (to use his own words), he said he “couldn’t but wonder to think how *the hard scissors* could treat the lips in particular with so much ex-

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pression." She then took some lessons from a sculptor; and fortune seemed in her hands, when the worms, that a modeller cannot avoid in manipulating the fresh clay, sickened her so with her crushing them, that, being in a delicate state of health, she was obliged to give up the practice. A well-intended but ill-advised treatment of her constitution in girlhood had brought on a life-long spitting of blood, which was only lessened by the years of acute rheumatism, that in depriving her of all power of locomotion ultimately killed her; though such is the strength given to weakness itself by a quiet domestic life, and the care of a good physician (Dr. Southwood Smith, famous for keeping friends in delicate health alive), that she outlived many another physician who had augured her a brief existence, and she died at the age of sixty-nine. I wonder how I can talk of these things as calmly as I do; but I myself am in my seventy-fifth year, and I seem to be speaking more of those whom I am to join again shortly than of such as have left me at a distance. Like them too, though alive I decay; and when I go to bed, and lie awhile on my back before turning to sleep, I often seem to be rehearsing, not without complacency or something better, the companionship of the grave.

May all of us who desire to meet elsewhere do so, and be then shown the secret of the great, the awful, yet, it is to be trusted, the beautiful riddle; for why (let it be asked again) so much half-beauty here, and such need for completing it, if complete it is not to be? I do not think that enough has been made of that argument from analogy, divine as was the mind of Plato that suggested it. Oh, why did any kind of religious creed ever put such injustice into its better portion, as to render it possible for any of the Maker's infirm creatures to wish it might not be true, even for others' sakes? For my part, infirm as I am, I fear it not for myself or for my body, trusting, as I do, to that only kind of divineness which it is possible for me to believe in; which has *itself* made it impossible for me to believe otherwise. As to the fulfilment of these yearnings on earth to be made entire in a future state, I can no more



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believe in the existence of regions in space where God has made half-orbs in their heavens, as half-oranges on their trees, than I can believe He will fail to make these anxious half-satisfied natures of ours which thus crave for completeness, as entire and rounded in that which they crave for, as any other fruits of His hands.

To return to the business of the brief portion of life that remains to me:—I have only two more circumstances to particularize; both very pleasant in themselves, though occurring amidst a multitude of anxieties caused by vicissitudes in the fortunes, and bereavements in the homes, of dear friends and connections; the worst of which is, as far as one's self is concerned, that one cannot make little means fill up large wishes. Good God! how easy would it be for some persons, and how little meritorious because easy, to deal out thousands from their pockets, if they had them, especially to fill such pockets as have been too open to others! as easy (and I could not put the case stronger) ■ it is impossible for some to conceive it.

But to return to the circumstances alluded to. The first was the publication of an American edition of my collected poems,<sup>1</sup> proposed to me and carried out in Boston by my friend Mr. Lee, one of the illustrious family of the Lees of Virginia, connections of Washington, and brother founders with him of the Republic; and the other (which sounds like an anti-climax; but it is not so, for a reason which I shall presently mention), the appearance at last of ■ second of my plays at ■ London theatre, the one entitled *Lovers' Amazements*, of the nature of which an account has been given on ■ previous occasion.

Both these circumstances of late occurrence have been very precious to me; the first because of the universal burst of good-will towards me which it called forth from the American press, showing the heartiness with which the nation met the regrets of their kinsman at having in a moment of impatience with their book-

[<sup>1</sup> The *Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*. Now first entirely collected, revised by himself, and edited, with an Introduction, by S. Adams Lee. 2 vols. Boston, 1857.]

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sellers confounded the feelings of the nation with a mistake in its ordinances; and the second circumstance, first, because the play brought forth a like manifestation of regard from the whole of the London press, showing an increase rather than a loss of old sympathies; and secondly, because, on the first night of its performance, the audience called for me with the same fervour as on the first appearance of the *Legend of Florence*, and I felt myself again, as it were, in the warm arms of my fellow-creatures, unmistaken and never to be morbidized more.

I cannot sufficiently express to either country the joy which these circumstances gave me, and the good which they have done me. They would have been more than a set-off against the most painful portion of my life, if those whom I have lost had survived to partake the pleasure, and those who remain to me had not had trials of their own. But the pleasure is great still, and is shared still, to the comfort of us all; and the approach of my night-time is even yet adorned with a break in the clouds, and a parting smile of the sunset.

May we all meet on some future day among the vortex of living multitudes, the souls of the dead, where "all tears shall be wiped off from all faces"; or, in another view of futurity, before that time arrives, may we all meet in one of Plato's vast cycles of re-existence, experiencing the sum-total of all that we have ever experienced and enjoyed before, only under those circumstances of amelioration in the amount which progressive man has been made to look for, and with no necessity for the qualification of *errors excepted*.

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### POSTSCRIPT

[BY THORNTON HUNT]

THE event which was anticipated in the last chapter was not long delayed. Leigh Hunt died on the 28th of August, 1859; and he was buried in the place of his choice, Kensal Green Cemetery.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The funeral took place on Thursday Sept. 1. Among those who attended were his sons Thornton and Henry, two grandsons,

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He had for about two years been manifestly declining in strength. Although well aware of the grand cause, and more than content to meet the will of his Creator, he still retained a keen interest in life, and with characteristic cheerfulness constantly hoped that some new plan—some change of diet, or of place—would restore him for a few years more of companionship with surviving friends. Just two months before completing his seventy-fifth year, he quietly sank to rest. He had come to the end of the chapter which the reader has just perused; but the volumes were still awaiting one or two finishing touches, and it was left for other hands to close.

For some months before the end he had been planning a removal from his cottage at Hammersmith to London, in order to be nearer to his eldest son and some of his most valued friends; for he felt a renewed appetite for intercourse with other minds. In the interval, he was to visit some few friends out of town, especially Southwood Smith, and Charles Reynell, who lived near at hand. It is an interesting incident, that his very last efforts were devoted to aid the relatives of Shelley in vindicating the memory of the friend who had gone so many years before him. Among the passing visits of these later days was one to his old friend Charles Ollier, who contributed such important materials to the *Shelley Memorials*; <sup>1</sup> a valued companion being Charles Ollier's

and Mr. Cheltman his son-in-law; his old friends Mr. Reynell, Joseph Severn, Mr. Moran, Secretary of the American Embassy, and Edward J. Trelawny. A monument to Leigh Hunt's memory, subscribed for by a large number of admirers and friends, both in England and America, was erected over his grave. Among those who contributed were Robert Browning, John Bright, Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens, Lord Houghton, Lord Lytton, John Ruskin, Earl Russell, B. W. Procter, Sir Percy Shelley and Alfred Tennyson, and Mr. S. C. Hall at whose suggestion the subscription was started. The monument was inaugurated by Lord Houghton on Oct. 19, 1869, the 85th anniversary of Leigh Hunt's birth. It consists of a pedestal decorated with the design of a "Jar of Honey," and surmounted with a bust of the essayist, executed by Mr. Joseph Durham, A.R.A. The inscription contains the following line from "Abou Ben Adhem." "Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

[<sup>1</sup> *Shelley Memorials*: from Authentic Sources. Edited by [Jane] Lady Shelley [the wife of Shelley's son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley], to which is added an essay on Christianity. By Percy Bysshe

## LIFE DRAWING TOWARDS ITS CLOSE

son, Edmund, who was engaged in the same congenial task. Another of his latest visits was paid on purpose to see, and solace, an admirable friend whose excellence he had learned but lately to appreciate at its full. The sense of beauty and gentleness, of moral beauty and faithful gentleness, grew upon him as the clear evening closed in.

When he went to visit his relative<sup>1</sup> at Putney, he still carried with him his work and the books he more immediately wanted. Although his bodily powers had been giving way, his most conspicuous qualities—his memory for books, and his affection—remained; and when his hair was white, when his ample chest had grown slender, when the very proportion of his height had visibly lessened, his step was still ready, and his dark eyes brightened at every happy expression and at every thought of kindness. His death was simply exhaustion: he broke off his work to lie down and repose. So gentle was the final approach, that he scarcely recognized it till the very last, and then it came without terrors. His physical suffering had not been severe; at the latest hour he said that his only “uneasiness” was failing breath. And that failing breath was used to express his sense of the inexhaustible kindnesses he had received from the family who had been so unexpectedly made his nurses,—to draw from one of his sons, by minute, eager and searching questions, all that he could learn about the latest vicissitudes and growing hopes of Italy,—to ask the friends and children around him for news of those whom he loved,—and to send love and messages to the absent who loved him.

Shelley: now first printed. London. 1859. The volume contains numerous references to Leigh Hunt.]

[<sup>1</sup> Charles Reynell.]



# AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LEIGH HUNT

[The fragment printed below was discovered by the late Mr. Dykes Campbell, in a volume of pamphlets, etc., bound up by John Forster, and now in the Dyce and Forster collection at South Kensington. It was reprinted in the *Athenæum* of March 25 1893, and again in 1896 by Mr. R. Brimley Johnson in his biography of Leigh Hunt. The original copy, which is probably unique, consists of "a quarto half sheet, apparently printed to match with the first edition of *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*."] ]

## AN ATTEMPT OF THE AUTHOR TO ESTIMATE HIS OWN CHARACTER

**A**S I have said so much of others, it may be proper that I should be equally explicit with regard to myself. I will be so, and solely on that account. There are some things in this book, which make it proper to show how little I desire to have qualities attributed to me, bad or good, that I do not possess. What I have to say will contain matter which no reputation for candour could render it agreeable to say, and which nothing could induce me to set down, if I did not believe that truth in society were the one thing needful.

Born of parents of very different temperaments, and after they had undergone great adversity, I believe that my existence has been modified accordingly. I am at once the sickliest and most sanguine of my race, the liveliest and most thoughtful, the most social and the most solitary, the most indolent and the most laborious.

I am not naturally a teller of truth. Impulse and fancy would tend to make me the reverse; but I saw the danger of it; I should admire sincerity, if it were for nothing but the graces of it; but I have learnt to love it with all my heart and soul, as the only safe ground for humanity to go upon, and the one thing desirable above all others in the moral world. I believe truth to be that, in words, which the discovery of the experimental philosophy has been in science; and that as the latter will infallibly alter the face of society and give it the most new, golden, and unhop-

## ATTEMPT TO ESTIMATE HIS CHARACTER

for opportunities, so the former will be the secret for securing its happiness. I feel certain that if men could but compare notes to-morrow, and confess to one another their real feelings and desires, society would alter at once by acclamation.

I am naturally hasty and jealous; or, rather I was made jealous as I believe others to be, in the common course of education, for I do not believe that unloving interferer with love to be a natural human passion. But I have become jealous for others, more than of them; and the necessity for great patience has entirely subdued my hastiness; but the power of pleasing, and great indulgence from my friends, have left me a secret store of self-love, by reason of which I find the first smarting of any wound to my vanity extremely painful to me, so that I have to blush for myself for the very blushing that heats my cheek. But the next minute I philosophise myself quite out of the paroxysm; and I will affirm, as one of the surest things I know, that nobody can wound my self-love so much as to hinder me from valuing what is good in him and proclaiming it. Melancholy has done me that kind service that it has taught me to think too deeply of human nature, to quarrel at heart with any being that belongs to it.

Revenge I should be too indolent to care about, even if I had not learnt to know it for what it is. I pretend to be above nothing in a proud sense; but some things I have got remote from, and this is one.

Early delicacy of temperament, imagination, and a life of letters accompanied with an improvidence partly occasioned by indolence, partly by animal spirits, and partly by the most singular *missing* of everything like an arithmetical education, have rendered excitement so tempting to me, that were it not for my love of what is graceful, I fear that the necessity for health itself would hardly hinder me from being a drinker, and even a gourmand; and I confess it is a constant and hard exercise of my philosophy not to eat too much and make my stomach worse than it is.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LEIGH HUNT

My friends will be surprised to hear this. But flatter myself they will be more surprised when I tell them (and I suffer inexpressible pain in the telling it) that I am not a courageous man. I feel as if the respect of one sex, and the love of the other, were forsaking me when I say so ; but they ought not ; and this reflection re-assures me. Yes — circumstances, known only to myself, have shown me that the organization I was born with has been weakened, by subsequent cares and demands upon it, into a mortifying destitution of physical courage. In a family of men remarkable for their bravery I am the only timid person. When I look round upon my brothers I think that the fears of a mother, and the calamities caused by the American War, have deprived me of a part of my birthright. But I have great moral courage. Allow me a pale face and a little reflection ; and as there is scarcely a danger in life which I have not hazarded, so there is none I could not go through with in a good cause.

I differ with the world upon some great points of morals and religion. Modern philosophy, and new views for society, have taught me to do so. I know that I could have stood to the last—that I should not have been the first or even the last faithless friend—by the side of an unequivocally good system good for all, sincere, plain, equable, and fit for eternity. But I cannot and will not be a traitor to the nobler aspirations planted within us, and tending to produce such a system. If the world can be altered, I will not be one to baulk an event so glorious ; if it cannot, my endeavours shall be among those that keep it in heart. I have, indeed, something of the Hamlet in me (these speculations are far beyond either modesty or vanity), which makes me sometimes misgive myself, and doubt whether what appears to me best at one time is the same as another. But I was educated under one system, and learnt to believe in another. I pretend to be exempt from no weaknesses but falsehood, revenge, and implacability ; and must take my chance among other strugglers, sure only of good intentions. Oh,

## ATTEMPT TO ESTIMATE HIS CHARACTER

were others only sincere, how gladly would I learn of them, instead of teach; and how surely would the world know what is best for it, by the comparisons of their experience!

It is a singular chance in my history, that I have been led to give a personal account of another man—and that an unfavourable one—when there is nobody less given than myself to tattle and gossip, or who cares less to make a case out for himself at another's expense. But, perhaps, the greatest difference between me and any other living writer (with the exception of Mr. Hazlitt) is that I speak all in my own name and at my own risk, whereas the custom is to veil and play the hypocrite in a mask; and none will have been so loud against me on this occasion, as those who have played it most. I have sympathized deeply with almost every pain and pleasure of humanity—perhaps I might leave out the “almost”; for as there is scarcely a pain, bodily or mental, which I have not felt, so I am not aware of one which I have not, at some period or other, apprehended however foolishly.

I would not have missed the obligations I have had from my friends, no, hardly to have been exempt from all the cares of money; so little do I hold with that writer, who spoke the other day of the “degrading obligations of private friendship.” I see beyond that. But I do not the less hold with him, that it is “comely and sweet” to be able to earn one's own sufficiency. I only think that it should not be made so hard a matter to do so as it very often is, by the systems of society, and the effects which we have in reserve for us even before we are born, and in our very temperaments as well as fortunes; and I think also that the world would have been losers in a very large way—far beyond what the utilitarians suppose, and yet on their own ground—if certain men of a lively and improvident genius—humanists, of the most persuasive order, had not sometimes left themselves under the necessity of being assisted in a smaller way. But I desire, for my own part, not to be excused in anything, in which I do not take the whole of my fellow-creatures



## AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LEIGH HUNT

and their errors along with me. Let me not be left out of the pale of humanity for praise or for blame, and I am content. I desire only to teach and be taught, or if that be too presumptuous a saying, to learn and compare notes. Happy and proud as I am to have been obliged, [I] could have waived even that felicity to have saved myself the remorse of not having secured something for my children. But this, I trust, I am now in the way of doing. They have wits of their own, thank God! if I should fail; and they at least have a happy childhood and learn to have a passion for a liberal justice.

The rest of my character is to be seen in my writings, from which, for aught I know, the reader may draw a truer picture than I can do of it in all its parts. A clever but dishonourable French critic, who visited this country, and got his notions of some of the Liberal writers from the tables of the Scotch Tories, has described me as a great sensualist. He is mistaken. I am more candid than others, and perhaps more voluptuous, but I demand also more refinement in my pleasures, and cannot separate them from sentiment and affection; and hypocrites take advantages of my candour in this instance, as they do in others. I own I have an extreme sense of the pleasurable, but never unassociated with grace and with the heart, and I as little partake of some of those abuses of license, which coarse minds and narrow views for society have rendered legitimate, as I do in the face-making with which they are carried on. I have not even a secret from those I love; no, not one.

Let the reader think what a state society must be in, from the surprise which that confession alone will involuntarily create in him.

As to my person, I am dark and black haired, almost as a Creole; and have nothing to boast of but a gentlemanly carriage and a thoughtful face. Thought alone rescues my face from insignificance; but I must say it has not the expression, nor the villainous lower jaw, which the engraver in his "hurry" has given it in this book. [This refers to the portrait by J. Hayter.]

## APPENDIX I

“ I TOOK him for a Mr. ‘ Guy.’ ” (Vol. I., p. 113.)

... “ His [Lamb’s] recreations were confined to a delightful visit to the two-shilling gallery of the theatre, in company with his sister, and an occasional supper with some of his schoolmates, when in town, from Cambridge. On one of these occasions he obtained the appellation of *Guy*, by which he was always called among them, but of which few of his late friends heard till after his death. ‘ In the first year of his clerkship,’ says Mr. Le Grice, in the communication with which he favoured me, ‘ Lamb spent the evening of the fifth November [1792] with some of his former school-fellows, who, being amused with the particularly large and flapping brim of his round hat, pinned it up on the sides in the form of a cocked-hat. Lamb made no alteration in it, but walked home in his usual sauntering gait towards the Temple. As he was going down Ludgate Hill, some gay young men, who seemed not to have passed the London Tavern without resting, exclaimed, “ The veritable Guy ! no man of straw ! ” and with this exclamation they took him up, making a chair with their arms, carried him, seated him on a post in St. Paul’s Churchyard, and there left him. This story Lamb told so seriously, that the truth of it was never doubted. He wore his three-cornered hat many evenings, and retained the name of Guy ever after. Like Nym, he quietly sympathised in the fun, and seemed to say, “ that was the humour of it.” A clergyman of the city lately wrote to me, “ I have no recollection of Lamb. There was a gentleman called Guy, to whom you once introduced me, and with whom I have occasionally interchanged nods for more than thirty years ; but how is it I never met Mr. Lamb ? If I was ever introduced to him, I wonder that we never came in contact during my residence for ten years in Edmonton.” Imagine this gentleman’s surprise when I informed him that his nods to Mr. Guy had been constantly reciprocated by Mr. Lamb ! ”

*Memoirs of Charles Lamb*, by Sir T. N. Talfourd, pp. 10, 11, edited by Percy Fitzgerald, 1894.

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### APPENDIX II

[Vol. I., p. 192]

#### JOHN HUNT

OF John Hunt, save a few references in his brother's *Autobiography*, scarcely anything has been written. No biographical dictionary contains any notice of this sturdy reformer. Yet he was much esteemed by some of his great contemporaries, such as Byron and Hazlitt. But for his unflagging zeal in the cause of liberalism, much of the splendid pioneer work done by the *Examiner* would never have been achieved. He was born in 1775, and was Leigh Hunt's senior therefore by nine years. Apprenticed to Mr. Reynell, the printer, before the establishment of the *Examiner* in 1808, he had founded two newspapers, the *Statesman* and the *News*, but neither of these ventures turned out well. As printer of the *Examiner* his interests and those of his brother became as one. After much good fighting on behalf of the liberty of the press, in which John Hunt appears to have constantly acted as his brother's mentor, both the editor and printer of the *Examiner* suffered imprisonment. Save for a short estrangement, the result of an unhappy misunderstanding, the devotion of the brothers for one another terminated only with the death of the elder, which took place on September 7, 1848, at Brompton. The following passage from P. G. Patmore's *My Friends and Acquaintance*, relating to John Hunt, deserves a place in the present work :—

"There was one man, and one only, towards whom Hazlitt seemed to cherish a feeling of unmingled personal affection and regard ; that man was the late Mr. John Hunt, the elder brother of Mr. Leigh Hunt. Of him only Hazlitt was accustomed to speak uniformly in terms of unqualified admiration and esteem, as related to his personal character, no less than to his sound judgment and singular good sense. He used to say that if there was an honest man in the world, it was John Hunt. Nor did I ever hear him speak disparagingly of him in even the smallest particular of either character or conduct except on one occasion.

" ' Look here,' said he, as I went in one morning as he was sitting at his breakfast, reading a letter he had just received. ' Look here ! '—handing me the letter, and pointing to the seal on it, on which was a showy crest or coat-of-arms—' what d'you think of that from John Hunt—from the reviler of aristocratic distinctions—the sturdy democrat—the only honest leveller and republican of them all—and the only one among them all who would die a martyr to his opinions, if he could propagate them by doing so ? '

## JOHN HUNT

“ As some of my earliest and most vivid recollections of Hazlitt are connected with this gentleman, I shall recur to them here. The first evidence Hazlitt gave me of a disposition to cultivate my society—or rather to accept it—for he cultivated no one—his mind and genius were essentially contemplative, and disposed to that loneliness which contemplation asks—was his inviting me to accompany him one Sunday morning in a visit to Mr. John Hunt, who was then confined in the Coldbath Fields Prison for a political libel which had appeared in the *Examiner* newspaper of which the Hunts were the sole proprietors. We went, and found Mr. Hunt walking in the garden of the prison ; and I shall not forget the impression his appearance and manner made on me—corresponding so precisely as they did with the previous notion I had entertained of his personal character. I have never seen in any one else so perfect an outward symbol or visible setting forth of the English character in its most peculiar and distinguishing features, but also in its best and brightest aspect, as in Mr. John Hunt. A figure tall, robust, and perfectly well formed ; ■ carriage commanding and even dignified, without the slightest apparent effort or consciousness of being so ; ■ head and a set of features on a large scale, but cast in a perfectly regular mould ; handsome, open, and full of intelligence, but somewhat hard and severe ; an expression of bland benevolence, singularly blended with a marble coldness of demeanour almost repulsive, because almost seeming to be so intended. Such were the impressions produced on me by the first *abord* of John Hunt, as I saw him within his prison walls.

“ As I afterwards became better acquainted with Mr. John Hunt and his accomplished brother, and had all my first impressions confirmed about the former, I cannot let slip this occasion of testifying my belief that the wholesome and happy change that has taken place in our political and social institutions since the period above referred to, and is still in happy progress, is owing in no small degree to the excellent individuals just named ; for I verily believe that, without the manly firmness, the immaculate political honesty, and the vigorous good sense of the one, and the exquisite genius and varied accomplishments, guided by the all-pervading and all-embracing *humanity* of the other, we should at this moment have been without many of those writers and thinkers on whose unceasing efforts the slow but sure march of our political, and with it, our social regeneration as a people mainly depends. Of this I am certain—that without the writings of Mr. Leigh Hunt himself, we should have missed a large measure of that high and pure tone of political and of social feeling from which everything is to be hoped in the way of progress towards future good ; and (having which, nothing need be feared in the way of retrogression towards past evils. Many causes may interfere to retard the coming on of that fair pageant of political and social amelioration which already shines



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palpable and visible in the future, even like the coming on of the heavenly host in the *Paradise Lost*. But there, in the 'clear obscure' of the distance, the embodied splendour shines, and nothing can ever again abolish or blot it out."

### APPENDIX III

[Vol. I., p. 192]

#### PROSPECTUS OF THE *EXAMINER*

A NEW SUNDAY PAPER<sup>1</sup>

Upon Politics, Domestic Economy, and Theatricals

Price, 7½d.

THE promises of newspapers have become almost as valuable as the promises of courtiers. Every new journal grows vain upon its modest pretensions; the Proprietors, with much unintentional simplicity, are always flattering themselves on their industry and genius; and, it must be confessed, that no politics can be more impartial, no criticism more refined, and no general information given with a more literary air, than what these gentlemen intend. But all this is magnificent in its announcement only. The newspaper proves to be like the generality of its species, very mean in its subserviency to the follies of the day, very miserably merry in its puns and its stories, extremely furious in politics, and quite as feeble in criticism. You are invited to a literary conversation, and you find nothing but scandal and commonplace. There is a flourish of trumpets and—enter Tom Thumb. There is an earthquake and a worm is thrown up. The Reader anticipates us here. "Ay," cries he, "here is the old prospectus Cant: everything is wretched in comparison with the *New Paper*—we shall have the ancient *But* in a minute—but the *Proprietors of the Examiner* scorn to come forward—and so forth." This is a very good observation, but a little inapplicable. The Proprietors, who will be the writers of the *Examiner*, cannot entirely deceive the town, for they are in some degree already known to the Public. *The Gentleman who has hitherto conducted, and is at present conducting, the THEATRICAL DEPARTMENTS in the NEWS*, will criticise the Theatre in the *EXAMINER*, and as the public have allowed the possibility of IMPARTIALITY in that department, we do not see why the same possibility may not be obtained in POLITICS.

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<sup>1</sup> The first number of this paper appeared on January 30, 1808.

## PROSPECTUS OF THE *EXAMINER*

The great error of politicians is that old fancy of SOLON, who insisted that it was infamous for a citizen to be of no party, and endeavoured by a law to make the Athenians hypocrites. This conceit not only destroys every idea of mediation between two parties, but does not even suppose that both may be wrong. Yet all history may convince us that he who resolutely professes himself attached to any party, is in danger of yielding to every extreme for the mere reputation of his opinion ; he will argue for the most manifest errors of this or that statesman, because he has hitherto agreed with him—an obstinacy as stupid ■ if a pedestrian were to express his satisfaction with ■ tempest at night, because he had enjoyed sunshine in the morning.

The big and little Endians in *Gulliver* have not yet taught us the folly of mere party ; and one of the most ridiculous inconsistencies in the human character is that enjoyment, which all ages have expressed, in satirical productions, without receiving benefit from them ; they drink the physic with a bold and pleasant countenance, and instantly prepare to counteract its effect ; or rather, every man thinks the physic excellent for everybody but himself. “Party,” says SWIFT, “is the madness of many for the gain of few.” When *Scarmiento* in VOLTAIRE arrived at Ispahan, he was asked whether he was for black mutton or white mutton ; he replied that it was equally indifferent to him, provided it was tender. A wise man knows no party abstracted from its utility, or existing, like ■ shadow, merely from the opposition of some body. Yet in the present day, we are all so erroneously sociable that every man, as well as every journal, must belong to some class of politicians ; he is either Pittite or Foxite, Windhamite, Wilberforceite, or Burdettite, though at the same time two thirds of these disturbers of coffee-houses might with as much reason call themselves Hivites, or Shunamites, or perhaps Bedlamites.

A crowd is no place for steady observation. The *EXAMINER* has escaped from the throng and bustle, but he will seat himself by the way-side and contemplate the moving multitude as they wrangle and wrestle along. He does not mean to be as noisy as the objects of his contemplation, or to abuse them for a bustle which resistance merely increases, or even to take any notice of those mischievous wags who might kick the mud towards him as they drive along ; but the more rational part of the multitude will be obliged to him when he warns them of an approaching shower, or invites them to sit down with him and rest themselves, or advise them to take care of their pockets. As to the language and style in which his advice will be given, it would be ridiculous to promise that which haste, or the headache, might hinder him from performing. Perhaps it must still be left to statesmen to amuse in politics.

With respect to the THEATRIC CRITICISM, the Proprietors merely observe that it will be in the same spirit of opinion and

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manner with the *present* theatrical observations in the *News*. The Critic trusts he has already proved in that paper that he has no respect for error, however long established, or for vanity, however long endured. He will still admire MR. KEMBLE when dignified, but by no means when pedantic ; he hopes still to be satisfied with MR. DIBDIN in a Christmas pantomime, but is afraid he shall differ with him as to his powers for comedy. Yet the town may be assured that if either MR. DIBDIN or MR. REYNOLDS should suddenly become a man of wit, the Critic will be as eager to announce the metamorphosis as if it were the discovery of transmuting lead into gold. Perhaps he may be considered vain in proclaiming his qualifications for criticisms, but he cannot help betraying how infinitely the dramatists of the day have abused him. He would not have mentioned this, but the natural infirmity of an author, speaking of himself, must be pardoned for once, especially when he does not dwell upon so flattering a subject.

The little attention which newspapers pay to the FINE ARTS is no little proof of a very indifferent taste, especially when we consider that this country possesses its own school of painting ; that we have artists like WEST who claim every merit so much admired in the old masters except indeed that of being in the grave ; and that a youth, named WILKIE, has united HOGARTH with the Dutch school by combining the most delicate character with the most delicate precision of drawing. These great geniuses make us the best compensation for the loss of the Drama by reviving Tragedy and Comedy on the canvas. Yet! they are scarcely ever noticed except in those annual sketches of the Exhibition, which a newspaper cannot help giving because they constitute part of the fugitive news. We will try therefore to do a little better. An artist will conduct our department of the Fine Arts. If he does not promise for his taste, he promises for his industry. He will be eager in announcing to the public not only the promiscuous merits of exhibitions, but those individual pictures which deserve to engage the public attention singly, those happy rarities, which like the *Wolfe* and *La Hogue* of WEST, the *Village Politicians*, *Blind Fiddler*, and *Steward Receiving Rent*, of WILKIE, almost create æras in the history of painting.

As it requires but a moderate proportion of good sense to regulate the DOMESTIC ECONOMY of a newspaper, the proprietors might indulge themselves a little more perhaps in promising peculiar care in this department. At any rate they will never acquiesce in those gayer or gloomier follies of the world, whether of rakes or of prize-fighters, to which the papers give their sanction with so cold-blooded an indifference. They do not intend, like the *Society for the Suppression of Vice*, to frighten away the innocent enjoyments of the poor by dressing Religion in a beadle's laced hat and praying heaven to bless the ways of informers ; but they will never speak of

## PROSPECTUS OF THE *EXAMINER*

adultery and seduction with levity nor affect to value that man, however high his rank or profuse of interest his connexion, who dares to take advantage of his elevation in society to trample with gayer disdain on the social duties. As to those selfish and vulgar cowards, whether jockies, who will run a horse to death, or cock-fighters, who sit down to a table on which fowls are served up alive, as to those miserable ruffians, whether the ornament of a gaol or the disgracers of a noble house, who thank God for giving them strength by endeavouring to annihilate the strength of others, who, like a Hottentot beauty, value themselves upon a few bones, and call fighting for a few guineas English spirit, they are most probably out of the reach of literary ridicule which must be read before it is felt, but we shall use our strongest endeavour to hold up them and their admirers to the contempt of others who might mistake their murderous business for manliness. What ! Shall English noblemen crowd the highways to admire the exploits of a few thieves and butchers ? Shall they rush from the Court and the Senate to enrich a few sturdy vagabonds with the labour of their virtuous peasantry to shout over a fallen brute and be astonished at that sublime merit which is excelled by the leg of a dray horse ? What an amiable vivacity !

We are almost afraid to say that NO ADVERTISEMENTS WILL BE ADMITTED in the *EXAMINER*, for this assertion generally means that they will ; but the public will perhaps be inclined to believe the Proprietors when they declare, that though they intend to be engaged in the publication of books, they will not advertise a single one of their own works. Advertisements therefore will hardly be inserted for anybody else ; they shall neither come staring in the first page at the breakfast table to deprive the reader of a whole page of entertainment, nor shall they win their silent way into the recesses of the paper under the mask of general paragraphs to filch even a few lines ; the public shall neither be tempted to listen to somebody in the shape of a wit who turns out to be a lottery-keeper, nor seduced to hear a magnificent oration which finishes by retreating into a peruke or rolling off into a blacking-ball.

If some weekly papers, however, have a page of advertisements at the beginning, they have also a page of markets at the end ; they commence by informing us of the retail of London, and conclude by communicating the wholesale. This is a pleasant uniformity especially in a paper containing all the news of the week. But as there are fifteen daily papers that present us with advertisements six days in the week, and as there is perhaps about one person in a hundred who is pleased to see two or three columns occupied by the mutability of cattle and the vicissitudes of leather, the Proprietors of the *EXAMINER* will have as little to do with bulls and raw hides as with lottery men and wig makers.

Above all, the New Paper shall not be disgraced by those



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abandoned hypocrites, whose greatest quackery is their denial of being quacks. Their vile indecency shall not gloat through the mask of philanthropy, sickness shall not be flattered into incurability, nor debauchery indulged to the last gasp by the promises of instant restoration. If the paper cannot be witty or profound, it shall at least never be profligate.

### APPENDIX IV

#### LEIGH HUNT AND THE CIVIL LIST PENSION

[Vol. II., p. 229]

PROBABLY not very long before Leigh Hunt settled down to write or compile his *Autobiography*—in June, 1847, he was granted a Civil List Pension of £200 a year “in consideration of his distinguished literary talents.” There is a letter to John Forster, dated June 15, 1846 (just a year earlier than the grant), printed in Hunt’s *Correspondence*, in which he briefly surveys his qualifications for a pension, and alludes to his imprisonment, and many government prosecutions in the past. “I believe,” says Thornton Hunt on this subject, “I am very near the truth when I say that it is to the unwearied thoughtfulness of John Forster, and to the deliberate and strongly formed convictions of Macaulay, that Leigh Hunt mainly owed the pension which was granted to him in 1847. I am well aware that it would not have been obtained without the powerful aid of Lord John Russell, of whose friendship Leigh Hunt was very proud. And he never lost a lurking hope and belief, unconstitutional as the idea was, that he owed no small part to the individual kindness of Queen Victoria. ‘Let all your acknowledgments,’ says Macaulay in a letter, dated June 26, 1847, ‘be to the Queen and to Lord John. Indeed your real benefactor is Lord John. The Pension is absolutely at his disposal; and he selected you from among twenty people whose claims were pressed on him by different solicitors. He ought therefore to have the undivided credit.’” Among those who interested themselves on Leigh Hunt’s behalf was his old friend Thomas Carlyle, whose testimonial is given below with Lord John Russell’s letter announcing the grant.

#### “MEMORANDA CONCERNING MR. LEIGH HUNT.

“1. That Mr. Hunt is a man of the most indisputedly superior worth; a *Man of Genius* in a very strict sense of that word, and in all the senses which it bears or implies; of brilliant varied gifts, of graceful fertility, of clearness, lovingness, truthfulness; of childlike open character; also of most pure, and even exemplary private deportment; a man who can be other than *loved* only by those who

## LEIGH HUNT'S PENSION

have not seen him, or seen him from a distance through a false medium.

"2. That, well seen into, he *has* done much for the world ;—as every man possessed of such qualities, and freely speaking them forth in the abundance of his heart for thirty years long, must needs do ; *how* much they that could judge best would perhaps estimate highest.

"3. That, for one thing, his service in the cause of reform, ■ Founder and long ■ Editor of the *Examiner* newspaper, ■ Poet, Essayist, Public Teacher in all ways open to him, are great and evident : few now living in the kingdom perhaps could boast of greater.

"4. That his sufferings in that same cause have also been great ; legal Prosecution and Penalty (not dishonourable to him, nay, honourable, were the whole truth known, as it will one day be) : illegal obloquy and calumny through the Tory Press ;—perhaps a greater quantity of baseness, persevering, implacable calumny, than any other living writer has undergone. Which long course of hostility (nearly the cruellest conceivable, had it not been carried on in half, or almost total misconception) may be regarded as the beginning of his other worst distresses, and a main cause of them down to this day.

"5. That he is heavily laden with domestic burdens, more heavily than most men, and his economical resources are gone from him. For the last twelve years he has toiled continually, with passionate diligence, with the cheerfullest spirit ; refusing no task ; yet hardly able with all this to provide for the day that was passing over him ; and now, after some two years of incessant effort in a new enterprise (*The London Journal*) that seemed of good promise, it has also broken down ; and he remains in weak health, age creeping on him, without employment, means or outlook, in a situation of the painfullest sort. Neither do his distresses, nor did they at any time, arise from wastefulness, or the like, on his own part (he is a man of humble wishes, and can live with dignity on little) ; but from crosses of what is called Fortune, from injustice of other men, from inexperience of his own, and a guileless trustfulness of nature : the thing and things that have made him unsuccessful make him really *more* lovable, and plead for him in the minds of the candid.

"6. That such a man is rare in a Nation, and of high value there ; not to be *procured* for a whole Nation's Revenue, or recovered when taken from us : and some £200 a year is the price which this one, whom we now have, is valued at ; with that sum he were lifted above his perplexities, perhaps saved from nameless wretchedness ! It is believed that, in hardly any other way, could £200 abolish as much suffering, create as much benefit, to one man, and through him to many and all.

## APPENDIX

"Were these things set fitly before an English Minister, in whom great part of England recognises (with surprise at such a novelty) a man of insight, fidelity, and decision, is it not probable or possible that he, though from a quite opposite point of view, might see them in somewhat of a similar light ; and so seeing, determine to do it in consequence ? *Ut fiat !*

"T. C."

FROM LORD JOHN RUSSELL TO LEIGH HUNT.

DOWNING STREET, 22nd June, 1847.

SIR,—I have much pleasure in informing you that the Queen has been pleased to direct that, in consideration of your distinguished literary talents, a pension of Two Hundred Pounds yearly should be settled upon you from the funds of the Civil List.

Allow me to add, that the severe treatment you formerly received, in times of unjust persecution of liberal writers, enhances the satisfaction with which I make this announcement.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your faithful servant,

J. RUSSELL.

## APPENDIX V

### LEIGH HUNT'S HAMPSTEAD RESIDENCES

AN attempt has been made, in the Chronology prefixed to this edition of the *Autobiography*, to name at least the chief of Leigh Hunt's many places of residence. Of those places, Hampstead is the best associated with his name. He loved the place, and was made to suffer to some extent on that account. In the attacks on Hunt, now happily forgotten, which appeared in *Blackwood* and elsewhere, his association with Hampstead is made to serve as a subject for offensive jests. His first introduction to the place was probably when his father went to live at Hampstead Square. At a later date his mother, at her desire, was buried in Hampstead Churchyard, although she did not die at Hampstead. Leigh Hunt first went to live at Hampstead in 1811, and he remained there until his prosecution and removal to prison in February, 1813. Mr. E. E. Newton in an interesting contribution to the *Hampstead Gazette* of August 16, 1902, has endeavoured to locate the position of Hunt's domicile at that time ; he refers to a letter dated from "West End, Hampstead, Tuesday morning, 6th October, 1812," addressed to his physician, Dr. William Knighton (afterwards Sir William Knighton). "Leigh Hunt wanted medical advice, both for himself and for his son, Thornton, and he adds by way of direction, that 'The lane to West-end runs out of Kilburn a little beyond the turnpike—that

## HAMPSTEAD RESIDENCES

my cottage stands in the heart of the place insulated in a little garden on the gate of which is my name in a fair plate of brass and that your luncheon, called by us a dinner, is ready for you any day you may come precisely at two o'clock.' Where is the 'fair plate of brass' now, and where was the exact situation of the cottage? From Leigh Hunt's own description it could not have been a very pretentious abode and I am inclined to think it must have been one of those cottages in West-end-lane, nearly opposite West-end-green of which only one or two now remain, the picturesque greengrocer's shop of Mr. Miles being one of the number; or could it have been that old cottage facing the Green, belonging to the *Cock and Hoop* (both of which have been razed to the ground for the purpose of erecting Alexandra Mansions), for Leigh Hunt speaks of it, as I have already mentioned, as being 'insulated in a little garden,' whereas one of a row could not correctly bear this description. In another letter written just before the date of the one I have quoted, to Henry Brougham, he says he is about to move to a cottage at West-end, Hampstead, 'a really *bona-fide* cottage, with humble ceilings and unsophisticated staircase; but there is green about it, and a garden with laurels.' I am well aware that for some years previous to its demolition this *Cock and Hoop* cottage served for the separate residence of two families, but it is very probable that ninety years ago it was not semi-detached, but one 'insulated' building. An illustration of it now before me gives me that impression."

On Hunt's release from prison in 1815, after a short stay in the Edgware Road, he returned to Hampstead. In the *Autobiography* he says, "In the spring of the year 1816 I went to reside again in Hampstead, for the benefit of the air, and of my old field walks; and there I finished the *Story of Rimini*, which was forthwith published." The dedication of his book is dated "Hampstead, Jan. 26, 1816." Mr. Newton continues, "This later residence was the small cottage which he describes as being 'down a bleak path' in the Vale-of-health." Mr. W. Henry Miller, to whom the present editor of the *Autobiography* is indebted for some interesting information on the subject, has been informed by Mr. L. Brown, a resident for many years in the Vale of Health, that he knew the owner of the old cottages which occupied the present site of "South Villa," and she showed him a pane of glass taken from the window of one of these cottages which bore the line from Gray's "Elegy"—"Far from the madding crowd," etc., said to have been scrawled by Byron with a diamond, in his well-known hand. This would appear to have been Hunt's cottage in 1816, "the little packing case, dignified with the name of house," where he was visited by Byron,<sup>1</sup> Shelley and

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<sup>1</sup> Byron left England in 1816.



## APPENDIX

Keats, the parlour of which Keats described as "no larger than a mansion's closet" in his *Sleep and Poetry*. Hunt left Hampstead in 1817 for Lisson Grove North.

We now come to the year 1821, when Leigh Hunt was 37, and his third residence in Hampstead: Shelley, Byron and Keats were all at this time in Italy. He occupied a house in the Vale of Health and remained there till the November of that year, when he left England for Italy. Of the cottage now known as Hunt, and formerly as Rose, Cottage, which is threatened with destruction, Mr. Miller says "although there does not appear to be any reliable evidence that Leigh Hunt ever lived there, there are some circumstances that suggest his having occupied it with the adjoining Woodbine Cottage. Mr. L. Brown, the present occupier of Woodbine Cottage, on having the walls stripped preparatory to repapering noticed that what appeared to have once been a doorway connecting the two houses had been bricked up." Hunt's family, which was a growing one, probably found accommodation in the two cottages. Mr. Brown has been assured by a resident who used to play at bowls with Hunt on the green opposite the cottage, that Hunt lived at Woodbine Cottage. There was a pump situated outside the cottage, on the east side, to which Hunt is said to have applied himself vigorously whenever he suffered any literary reverse.

## APPENDIX VI

### PORTRAITS OF LEIGH HUNT<sup>1</sup>

- 1802\* R. BOWYER, miniature painter to the King, engraved by Parker for *Juvenilia*, 1802. Full face, half length, in an oval. Lithographed by G. H. Ford for vol. II. of the *Autobiography*, 1850, and reproduced in Mr. R. B. Johnson's *Christ's Hospital*.
- 1815 T. WAGEMAN. A pencil sketch. Three-quarter face, three-quarter length. Reproduced in the *Century Magazine*, March, 1882; in *Scribner's Magazine*, March, 1888; in Mary Cowden Clarke's *My Long Life* and in Mrs. James T. Field's *A Shelf of Old Books*, 1894. Drawn at the request of Vincent Novello when Leigh Hunt left prison in 1815.
- Before 1821 JOHN JACKSON, R.A. Engraved by Freeman. Published while Hunt was Editor of the *Examiner*. Half length, three-

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the information in this list is derived, by his kind permission, from Mr. R. Brimley Johnson's edition of Leigh Hunt's essays and poems. The portraits distinguished with an asterisk (\*) appear in the present edition of the *Autobiography*.

## PORTRAITS OF LEIGH HUNT

quarter face. Reproduced in George Birkbeck Hill's *Talks about Autographs*, 1897, and in *The Book Buyer*, New York, February, 1897. This picture is wrongly described by Thornton Hunt in the *Autobiography* of his father, 1860, as forming the frontispiece to *Juvenilia*. He adds that the portrait has "an air of heavy laziness, said to have characterized the artist, but certainly foreign to the sitter."

1818 WILDMAN. A chalk drawing executed in 1818 by Thornton Hunt's drawing-master. Half length: described by Mrs. Leigh Hunt in a letter published in her husband's *Correspondence*, as "large as life . . . one of the most astonishing likenesses that was ever seen; you would almost think it was going to speak to you." A copy of the head was sent to Shelley in August, 1818. Apparently this picture is no longer in existence.

1820\* JOSEPH SEVERN. An unfinished miniature, aged 36, 1820. Head—three-quarter face—engraved by J. C. Armytage, for *Men, Women, and Books*, 1847, and lithographed by G. H. Ford, for vol. I. of the *Autobiography*, 1850.

1821 B. R. HAYDON. An oil painting. Half length, three-quarter face. In the National Portrait Gallery. Reproduced in Dr. Guido Biagi's *The Last Days of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 1898. Described by Mr. W. Leigh Hunt as belonging to 1821.

1828\* J. HAYTER. Half length, three-quarter face. Engraved by H. Meyer for *Lord Byron and His Contemporaries*, 1828. Reprinted in the Paris edition of the same, and in the *Indicator and Companion*, 1834; in the American edition of Leigh Hunt's poems, by H. Wright Smith, in 1857; in *Favourite Poems of Leigh Hunt*, 1877, and etched by M. Lalauze for *Tales from Leigh Hunt*, 1891.

1834 DANIEL MACLISE, R.A. An etching, full length, leaning against a wall, with hat and gloves in hand, signed "A. Croquis." In *Fraser's Magazine*, June, 1834, one of the *Gallery of Illustrious Literary Men*. Republished in William Bates' *The MacLise Portrait Gallery*, 1873.

[Date doubtful]\* DANIEL MACLISE, R.A. A pencil sketch, full length, seated in a chair at a table; in the Forster Collection at South Kensington. No date.

1837\* SAMUEL LAWRENCE. An oil-painting, unfinished. Full face, three-quarter length, seated, taken in 1837. In possession of Mr. Walter Leigh Hunt. Reproduced by photography in Leigh Hunt's *Correspondence*, 1862; also in *The Art Journal*, October, 1865; woodcut in *Scribner's Magazine*, March, 1888; and in Mrs. James T. Field's *A Shelf of Old Books*, 1894; also in Mr. R. Brimley Johnson's biography of

## APPENDIX

- Leigh Hunt, 1894. Declared by Mr. Walter Leigh Hunt (as well as by his father, Mr. Thornton Hunt) to be far the best existing portrait of his grandfather.
- 1837      SAMUEL LAWRENCE. A study for the foregoing picture. Reproduced in Mr. R. Brimley Johnson's edition of the *Essays and Poems* of Leigh Hunt, 1891.
- 1841      MRS. GLIDDON. Bust profile, aged 57 (1841). A woodcut reproduced in *A Tale for a Chimney Corner*, 1869.
- About  
1846      MARGARET GILLIES. Painting, three-quarter length, three-quarter face, middle age. In the National Portrait Gallery, presented by Canon Ainger. Engraved on wood for the *People's Journal*, 1846, and the *Eclectic Magazine*, November, 1846. Engraved for the frontispiece of the new edition of *The Old Court Suburb*, edited by Mr. Austin Dobson, 1902.
- 1850\*      W. F. WILLIAMS. Head and shoulders, three-quarter face, aged 66 (1850). Engraved by J. C. Armytage for new edition of *Autobiography*, 1860. It appears in Charles Kent's *Leigh Hunt as Poet and Essayist*, 1890, and in Baines' *History of Hampstead*.
- 1850      G. F. FORD. "On stone, from life." Half length, full face, aged 66 (1850). For vol. III. of the *Autobiography*, 1850.

## A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF BOOKS WRITTEN OR EDITED BY LEIGH HUNT.

The poetical works are printed in *Italics*, the prose in Roman type. Articles and poems reprinted are given in small type.

1801 *Juvenilia* : or ■ collection of poems. Written between the ages of twelve and sixteen, by J. H. L. Hunt, late of the Grammar School of Christ's Hospital, and dedicated by permission to the Hon. J. H. Leigh, containing Miscellanies, Translations, Sonnets, Pastorals, Elegies, Odes, Hymns and Anthem [quotations]. London. Printed by J. Whiting, Finsbury Place, 1801.

The dedication "To the Hon. James Henry Leigh" is dated from Robert Street, Bedford Row, May 17, 1800. The frontispiece illustrating "And ah ! let Pity turn her dewy eyes, Where gasping Penury unfriended lies," is by R. L. West and engraved by F. Bartolozzi, R.A. [sculpt. 1801]. 8vo, pp. 209.

The list of subscribers to the first edition contains some interesting names, viz. : Rev. J. Ayscough, British Museum ; Sir Francis Baring, Bart., M.P. ; Mr. Alderman Boydell ; R. Bowyer, Esq., Miniature Painter to the King [he painted a portrait of Leigh Hunt at the age of seventeen, which was engraved as a frontispiece to an edition of *Juvenilia*] ; Sir W. Beechey ; Francis Bartolozzi, Esq., R.A. ; Richard Cosway, R.A. ; J. Copley, R.A. ; Richard Cumberland, Esq. ; William Cobbett, twelve copies ; George Dyer, Esq. ; Mr. Douce ; Philip Francis, Esq. ; H. Fuseli, Esq., R.A. ; Mr. Barron Field ; Mr. Favell and Miss Favell ; Isaac Hunt, M.A. of the Universities of Philadelphia and New York ; J. Hoppner, Esq., R.A. ; Mr. I. Hunt ; J. Lamb, Esq., South-Sea House ; Mrs. Godfrey Thornton ; Rev. L. Pepys Stephens, (*sic*) Under Grammar Master of Christ's Hospital ; Robt. Smirke, R.A. ; Thos. Stothard, R.A. ; John Horne Tooke, M.P. ; Rev. A. W. Trollope, Upper Grammar Master of Christ's Hospital ; Benjamin West, P.R.A. ; Raphael West, Esq. ; Richard Westall, R.A.

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#### Miscellanies—

*Macbeth ; or, The Ill-effects of Ambition. Written at the age of Twelve.*

*Content.*

*Lines on the Birthday of Eliza.*

*Lines to Miss S—— H——, on her Marriage.*

*Parody on Dr. Johnson's "Hermit Hoar," etc.*

*Lines addressed to a Particular Friend on his Birthday.*

*Speech of Caractacus to Claudius Cæsar*

*A Morning Walk and View.*

*Lines to the White Rose of America.*



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*Retirement; or, The Golden Mean.*  
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 „ *Od. i.*  
*Horace, Lib. ii., Od. vi.*  
 „ *Ode: "Integer Vitæ,"*  
 etc.  
*Sonnet to Sensibility.*  
 „ *on the Sickness of Eliza.*  
*The Negro Boy: a Ballad.*  
*Song to Eliza.*  
*Sonnet: "Say, Soft Eliza, good as*  
*thou art fair."*  
 „ *to Eve.*  
 „ *"Sweet are the Breezes."*  
*The Mad Girl's Song.*  
*Sonnet. In imitation of Lopez*  
*de Vega.*  
*To Zephyr. Imitated from the*  
*Spanish.*  
*Pastoral I. Spring. To George,*  
*Earl Guilford.*  
 „ *II. Summer. To Mas-*  
*ter F. H. Papen-*  
*diech.*  
 „ *III. Autumn. To the*  
*Honble. T. Erskine.*  
 „ *IV. Winter. On the*  
*death of Mr.*  
*Cowper.*
- Elegy, written in Poet's Corner*  
*Westminster Abbey.*  
 „ *Epitaph on J. H. Beattie*  
*A.M.*  
 „ *Epitaph on Robespierre.*  
*Ode to the Evening Star.*  
 „ *to Valour.*  
 „ *to Honour.*  
 „ *to Truth.*  
 „ *for 1799.*  
 „ *to Genius.*  
 „ *on Friendship. Imitation of*  
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 „ *to Friendship. In the manner*  
*of Collins's Ode to Evening.*  
 „ *Friendship.*  
 „ *The Progress of Painting.*  
 „ *Wandle's Wave.*  
*Hymn to the Omnipotent God.*  
*Hymns for the Seasons—*  
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*Summer.*  
*Autumn.*  
*Winter.*  
*The Palace of Pleasure; an alle-*  
*gorical poem in two cantos.*  
*Written in imitation of Spen-*  
*ser.*  
*Anthem; written on the death*  
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*young lady who departed this*  
*life, January 14, 1801. Anno*  
*ætat su. 15.*
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The Strolling Player.

The Man in Black.

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The Decayed Beau.

The Clubbist (with plate by David Wilkie, engraved by Anker Smith, A.R.A.).

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Mr. Ireland states that these tales were published in monthly parts, at 2s. 6d. "and that it was the joint speculation of Mr. C. H. Reynell and Mr. John Hunt." The essays on Marmontel, Hawksworth and Sterne were written by Thomas Reynell. The others by Leigh Hunt. Some of the illustrations were designed by Leigh Hunt's brother Robert, who was an engraver.

- 1807 Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres, including general observations on the practice and genius of the stage. By the author of the Theatrical Criticisms in the weekly paper called the *News*. [Vignette and quotation from Horace.] London: Printed by and for John Hunt, at the office of the *News*, 28, Brydges Street, Strand. 1807. 8vo, pp. xvi. + 232 and Appendix pp. 60, Index pp. xviii., Prospectus of the *Examiner*, pp. viii.

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Tragedy.	„ Mr. Downton.
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„ Mrs. Siddons.	„ Miss Pope.
„ Mr. Pope.	„ Miss Mattocks.
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to omy, and Theatricals. Motto: "Party is the madness of  
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1810 Reformists' Reply to the *Edinburgh Review*. London, 1810. 8vo. Mentioned by Lowndes.

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Preface.

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*Notes to the Feast.*  
*Catullus's Return Home.*  
*Catullus to Cornificius.*  
*Catullus's Acme and Septimus.*  
*Horace's Ode to Pyrrha.*  
*Part of ■ Chorus in Seneca's Tragedy of Thyestes.*  
*Homer's Bacchus, or the Pirates.*  
*Sonnet to T. B., Esq.*

- 1815    The Feast of the Poets, with other pieces in verse. By Leigh Hunt. [Quotation from Callimachus.] Second edition amended and enlarged. London: Printed for Gale & Fenner, Paternoster Row, 1815. 8vo, pp. xii. +177 and 3 pp. of advertisements. [Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge, Surrey.]

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*Catullus's Acme and Septimus.*  
*Horace's Ode to Pyrrha.*  
*Part of ■ Chorus in Seneca's Tragedy of Thyestes.*  
*Homer's Bacchus, or the Pirates.*  
*Sonnet—to Thomas Barnes, Esq.*

„    to Hampstead.

„    to the same.

„    to the same.

„    to T. M. Alsager, Esq., with the Author's miniature on leaving prison.

„    to Hampstead.

„    to the same.

*Politics and Poetics.*

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No. 1. Introduction.

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„ 6. On Common-Place People.

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„ 25. The Subject continued.

„ 39. A Day by the Fire.

„ 40. The Subject continued.

„ 41. The Subject continued.

„ 44. On Washerwomen.

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